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SELF-REALIZATION THROUGH LOVE

NARADA BHAKTI-SUTRA, WITH TEXT IN SANSKRIT, TRANSLITERATION IN ROMAN, TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH AND COMMENTARY

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PREFACE

THERE are several alternative paths which may be trodden in order to achieve union with God or what is generally referred to as Self-realization. The path of devotion or love which is called *Bhakti-mārga* in Sanskrit is considered generally as an alternative to the path of knowledge or *Jñāna-mārga* which is dealt with in the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali. *Karma-mārga* or the path of action is considered as a subsidiary to both because it is meant to purify the mind, prevent the generation of further *karma* and attenuate the sense of egoism. It provides the necessary self-discipline for bringing the mind into a condition fit for the practice of Yoga by any method.

As has been explained in other contexts the so-called different systems of Yoga are not really independent and self-sufficient methods for attaining Self-realization, as is generally supposed. They should be considered rather as different branches of the comprehensive Science of Yoga, each system laying more emphasis on some technique of Yoga than on others. Not only this, one who is treading the path of Yoga can adopt one or the other of these techniques at a particular time according to his individual needs at that time and the phase of evolution through which he is passing.

The important point to keep in mind always is that the path of spiritual unfoldment is not a beaten track which every one has to follow in order to reach his goal. " Each man is to himself the life, truth and the way " and the path which he follows unfolds from within himself as he advances according to his individual uniqueness and the role which he is destined to play in the Divine Plan in the far distant future.

The *Bhakti-Sūtra* of Nārada gives in outline some of the salient features of the path of devotion or love and is considered as a sort of manual for those who want to realize God through the power of love. It does not deal with the subject with the mastery which is evident in treatises like *Yoga-Sūtra* and *Śiva-Sūtra* but it gives a fairly good general idea of *Bhakti-mārga* and is of great help to those who are trying to cultivate devotion and want some guidance and information on the subject in the early stages of its development. To those who are emotional by nature and for whom *Bhakti-mārga* is especially suited *Bhakti-Sūtra* can serve as a very useful guide.

But it should not be concluded from what has been said above that the cultivation of devotion is necessary only for people of an emotional temperament and those who are treading the path of knowledge can dispense with it. Nature aims at an all-round perfection of the individuality and this means that all aspects of human nature have to be developed sometime or other in the series of lives through which the individual passes in his spiritual unfoldment which ultimately ends in his attaining Self-realization and Liberation from the illusions and limitations of the manifested worlds. The possession of an emotional temperament in a particular life means merely that in that particular life the individual will find it much easier to unfold his spiritual potentialities through his emotional nature.

Devotion transcends the lower aspects of human nature expressing themselves through emotions, thoughts and actions and its development in the higher stages does not depend upon the limited scope and power of emotions. It is the Buddhic vehicle or *Ānandamaya-kośa* which comes into play in these higher stages and it is the descent of forces from the Buddhic plane which gives rise to the exquisitely refined emotions which are experienced in these stages. In fact, these experiences are of such a subtle nature that they are not only indescribable but incapable of being expressed through ordinary emotions. That is why a devotee who is swayed and frequently overwhelmed by violent emotions of love of God in the early stages, becomes quiet, self-controlled and reserved in the later stages.

Before we proceed further it would be desirable to make clear the true significance of the Sanskrit word *bhakti* and show how it differs from that of love and devotion, the two English words which are generally used in translating the Sanskrit word.

The word *love* has a very wide spectrum of connotations and has begun to be used very loosely these days. In its purest and highest form it is an aspect of God Himself who not only loves all living creatures and looks after their needs and evolution through the complex mechanism of Nature but who is found to be Love itself in His transcendental nature. That is the reason why we find love pervading all life and expressing itself in different ways through all living creatures.

It will be seen therefore that although the conception of love in its essential and highest form is holy and associated with the exquisitely fine experiences of life, its expression in its crude and lowest forms in the animal and human kingdoms has led the conception to be vulgarized and debased to the lowest degree. So much so, that a very large number of even intelligent people in their blind pursuit of pleasure have come to regard it as almost synonymous with sexual passion. The word *bhakti* has nothing to do with these lower forms of love either in the animal or human kingdom, whether associated with sex or not. It is used only for that love which man can have towards God either in the abstract or towards those Divine Beings who are considered as symbolic representations or incarnations of God.

The signification of devotion is equally wide and vague. In order to understand it fully we have to differentiate between the three forms in which devotion is generally expressed: 1. devotion to a cause, 2. devotion to an individual and 3. devotion to God.

Devotion to a cause is very common and we find everywhere people taking part in movements which have been launched to promote a cause. Devotion of this type will naturally depend upon the nature of the cause sought to be promoted. If the cause is good and beneficent and taken up by people whose moral and spiritual nature is adequately developed then the devotion will produce results which bring happiness or benefits of various kinds to a large number of people and in the process unfold the spiritual potentialities of those who are engaged in promoting the cause. But if the cause is bad and taken up by people without a moral and spiritual outlook and who are inclined to adopt ruthless and unscrupulous methods then devotion can become the means of inflicting enormous suffering on a large scale. History and the course of many movements based on idealogical considerations at the present time demonstrate clearly the truth of what has been said above.

Devotion to a person, though not so far-reaching in its results, also depends upon the nature and motive of the individual who is devoted and the individual towards whom devotion is directed. In the field of politics or business which are associated with power and money, in most cases it is not real devotion but mere self-interest masquerading as devotion. Where it is free from these defects and is based upon attachment to a person owing to his intellectual, moral or spiritual qualities it has a certain quality of moral or spiritual excellence which is both elevating and admirable.

But there is one danger inherent in this kind of devotion which the devotee has to guard against. It tends to circumscribe more or less or may even imprison the mind of the devotee and deprive it of its capacity to consider ideas and problems of life freely without any bias or predilection. If the individual is devoted to a religious or spiritual teacher, for example, his mind may become so conditioned by the teachings of the particular teacher that it becomes almost incapable of seeing and appreciating other aspects of truth which are equally important. It may also restrict the sphere of his interests and activities within an extremely limited range. *Āśrama-s* of religious teachers scattered all over India are full of such people whose lives have been "cribbed, cabined and confined" within the four walls deliberately raised by those who want to insulate their followers from the outer world for fear of losing them.

It will be seen, therefore, that both devotion to a cause or individual are not only liable to defects of various kinds but have generally the effect of limiting very greatly the freedom of mind and action on the part of the individual and enabling him to unfold freely his mental and spiritual potentialities. It is only devotion to God which is not only free from these defects and dangers but has the power and potentiality of unfolding *ad infinitum* the spiritual and Divine potentialities which are hidden within the heart of every human being. It has not only this power to stimulate tremendously these potentialities, but because it is directed towards a source of infinite love and bliss, it can bring about a response of such spiritual power as to change completely the life of the devotee. That is why devotion to God in preference to devotion to individuals is recommended and emphasized in the *Bhakti-Sūtra* in aphorism 81. Even where devotion is directed to one's spiritual teacher it should be directed not towards his personality but towards the God enshrined within him. *Iśvara* is the real Guru of all aspirants and devotees as pointed out in the following aphorism of the *Yoga-Sūtra*

sa pūrveṣām api guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt (I-26)

Though there are many religions in the world, each serving as a guide to conduct for its followers, it is necessary to remember the essential nature and purpose of religion in human life. Whatever other aspects of religion there may be, the one aspect which is the most important and essential is that it points out and makes clear the means of finding God. The conceptions of God may vary, the paths may vary, the disciplines may vary in the case of different religions but this essential purpose underlies all and is common to all religions. If this purpose is not there then the religion is not religion whatever else it may be. The codes of conduct and other paraphernalia of religious life prescribed in different religions are a means and not an end in themselves though they are considered as such by many of their followers. The above fact must be emphasized again and again not only to make religious life more meaningful and purposeful but to enable aspirants to separate the essentials of religious life from the non-essentials and concentrate on the essentials.

It will be seen from what has been said above that religion is related more closely to mysticism than to occultism and is the very essence of mysticism and the mystic life. The real mystic does not give much thought to other questions connected with human life, not even to the nature of the universe in which he finds himself. His only object of knowledge and devotion is God and he pursues this object with single-minded and concentrated attention to the exclusion of everything else. The student of *Bhakti-Sūtra* will be struck by the absence of discussion on any other question except that of devotion to God in the whole book. The mystic is concerned with God and God alone and he considers his whole life as a matter between him and his God. There is no mention in the *Bhakti-Sūtra* of any abstract philosophical questions or the problem of developing *siddhi-s*.

This concentration on one purpose whole-heartedly is perhaps one of the reasons why the path of devotion is much more effective in achieving its aim than others. No philosophical problems to worry about, no rigid rules of conduct to follow, no set pattern and paraphernalia of religious life to conform to and limit one's freedom. One can cultivate devotion wherever one happens to be and in whatever circumstances he is placed.

But this also means, however, that the purpose of devotion to God cannot be achieved unless the individual takes the problem seriously and is, in fact, in dead earnest. God does not respond to the call of half-hearted lazy aspirants who want to have the best of both the worlds or are content to have the ordinary emotional satisfactions of religious life such as the temporary upliftment felt now and then under favourable circumstances created by external stimuli such as singing of hymns, etc. This kind of easy-going religious life cannot carry one very far and at best keeps the individual attuned to his spiritual ideal instead of going off the track altogether. But this is the condition in which most aspirants will find themselves and from which they have to start on a more strenuous way of religious life if they are really serious.

Since the development of devotion is necessary for every aspirant, the question, " How to develop devotion ?" is of vital importance and must be considered carefully. In a way, man has greater control over his mind than over his emotions. It is easier to direct the mind to any problem of an intellectual nature and engage it in considering its various aspects. It is not so easy to arouse our emotions and begin to *feel* strongly our love for any one although he is dear to us. So the aspirant who decides to cultivate devotion to God has to learn how to make a beginning. This problem has not been dealt with clearly and satisfactorily in the *Bhakti-Sūtra*. The preliminary steps which have been recommended can be understood and adopted only by those who are thoroughly familiar with Hindu thought and tradition and cannot be of universal application. Since the cultivation of devotion is necessary for every aspirant we ought to understand and be able to apply the general principles upon which this cultivation of devotion is based.

The most important point to keep in mind in dealing with the above problem is that the development of devotion is not really a matter of development at all, but unveiling, because the Reality which is referred to as God is already present in the heart of every human being in its full splendour, and in its most important aspect, Love itself. No doubt, it is hidden and the ordinary man is unaware of it on account of his desires and other human tendencies which obscure It more or less. But what is already present and is merely obscured can be unveiled and revealed, if we know what the obscuring agents are and how they are removed.

It is not necessary to enter here in detail into the question of those human tendencies, limitations and illusions which serve as obscuring agents and make the individual unaware of the Reality which is hidden within his own heart and which he seeks in vain in the outer world through pleasures and pursuits of infinite variety. What we have to understand clearly is that our real task in solving this difficult problem is to tackle the mind and free it from those tendencies and impurities which serve as obscuring agents and veil the Reality hidden within it. As the mind is purified, harmonized and freed from distortions of different kinds, the veils gradually become thinner and ultimately disappear, leading to the progressive awareness of Reality which in one of its aspects is Love itself.

So the preliminary preparation for the cultivation of love consists in purifying and harmonizing the mind and bringing it into a state in which it can serve as the vehicle of love of God. The purpose of all self-discipline which is prescribed and the virtues which have to be cultivated is to produce this state of the mind and when the aspirant is successful in doing so and also adopts the other means of opening up the channel between the inner and outer levels of our Being, love begins to well up from within, naturally and in an ever-increasing measure. For, as pointed out later on, this process is self-regenerative. The more we love God the more we know Him and the more we know Him the more our love for Him grows, until knowledge and love merge into one state of permanent awareness of that Reality which is referred to as Self-realization.

The aspirant should note carefully these two stages on the *Bhakti-mārga*. The first stage is a period of constant effort, self-discipline, purification and the development of those virtues and state of mind which are required for the expression of *bhakti*. In this stage, periods of emotional exaltation and depression follow each other alternately. But if the aspirant perseveres in his intensive effort and has the necessary potentiality within him he passes gradually into the second stage in which love of God begins to well up from within naturally and constantly in an ever increasing measure without any effort on his part. This state called *parā-bhakti* or *paramaprema* which appears on attaining direct awareness of Reality is described very aptly in aphorism 54 and makes the devotee Self-sufficient and full of bliss and "Peace which passeth understanding".

It is necessary to distinguish between these two stages because unless and until the second stage has been reached and the devotee is firmly established in the love of God he cannot afford to relax his efforts to cultivate in the most intensive manner the deeper states of love referred to as *prema*. Too many aspirants begin to imagine that they have acquired the highest state of love and need not do anything further when actually they have just entered the path of love and have experienced love in its most elementary form. So exquisite and out of the common is the experience of this kind of love that a mere glimmer of it can be mistaken by the devotee for the highest experience in this field and incline him to relax his efforts in the cultivation of that love which is unfathomable and beyond all human experience. If he is not alert and becomes complacent, stagnation will set in and prevent him from attaining the second stage of *paramaprema* in which the expansion of love becomes self-regenerative.

The question whether devotion should be directed towards a personal or impersonal God troubles many aspirants. Some of them find it impossible to arouse their emotions towards a Reality which has no form and no attributes and therefore appears to be incapable of responding to their love. Others think that it is incongruous to imagine and worship what is an all-pervading, transcendental Principle in its essential nature through a concrete form. The difficulty is based upon a misconception or confused notion regarding the nature of the Reality which we refer to as God. There is only One Reality with its two aspects—transcendental and manifest. In its transcendental aspect it is a Principle without any form or attributes. In its manifest aspect it is the underlying basis of the manifested universe which is a mental creation of the Divine Mind. So whether we direct our devotion towards a personal God in the form of a symbolic representation of some of His attributes or an incarnation in a human form or we worship Him in His impersonal aspect it does not matter. Our devotion reaches the One Reality and the response comes from the same Reality. Every intelligent devotee, even when he worships God in a concrete form, is consciously or unconsciously aware of the fact that his devotion is being directed to the Reality which pervades and embraces the whole universe and is therefore also present in its full splendour and power in the concrete form which serves as its symbol.

Although a concrete form which is a symbolic representation or an individual in the form of *avatāra*, helps some people by giving their mind something tangible to imagine it is not necessary for every devotee. It is possible to direct one's devotion and cultivate it in the highest degree towards that impersonal Reality which is hidden within our own heart. This Reality is, no doubt, formless, invisible and inaudible and yet as it exists within our own heart in its fulness, and is the source of all knowledge, power and bliss and everything associated with spiritual life, devotion cannot only be directed towards it but can be developed in the highest intensity and even ecstasy.

It may appear incredible that one can love with the greatest intensity what has no form, substance or sound, nothing to indicate its existence, but it is true and a matter of the most vivid and exquisite experience for those who are real devotees and on whom Divine grace descends frequently and raises their consciousness to ecstatic heights. So, there is no reason to be disheartened if an individual does not feel any attraction towards a particular form. Even God in his impersonal aspect can be the object of the highest kind of devotion.

In fact, devotion for a personal God, if it is real and intense, tends to become more and more impersonal as it tends to outgrow the limitations of form, time and space and bring the consciousness of the devotee in touch with that One Reality which is above time and space. When this happens, love in its most exquisite form keeps welling up from within, as if from nowhere, and even when the devotee is engaged in physical or mental activity, his consciousness may be immersed in the ocean of Divine Love with hardly any feeling of separation left to indicate who is the lover and who is the beloved.

Although this kind of love is not easy to attain, the potentiality for cultivating it exists in every human being because God is enshrined in the heart of every human being and we have only to open the doors of this temple to have a vision of the Deity in His fullness of Love and Beauty, which overwhelms us and lifts our consciousness into union with His Consciousness. It is this kind of vision, even though it is partial and temporary, which throws the devotee into an ecstasy of love, and when he comes down from that exalted state makes him self-sufficient and self-contained and full of indescribable bliss.

Nothing of real value in life is attained suddenly and without effort and there is nothing which cannot be gained with persevering effort. This is particularly true of those great things in life which are already present within us in a potential form and which we are destined to develop in an active form sooner or later because they are part of our Divine heritage. How long we shall keep ourselves deprived of this divine heritage depends partly upon our *karma* and partly upon our sense of discrimination or *viveka* which enables us to distinguish between the Real and the unreal, between what is illusory and what is of real and lasting value. But our *karma* is not inexhaustible and our faculty of discrimination is only dormant. We can remove both the impediments if we want to do so. All that we have to do is to make a beginning and persevere in our efforts. It is therefore possible for every aspirant to cultivate love of God to the highest degree and attain that Self-sufficiency and peace of the Eternal which is inherent in that Love and which cannot be found without that Love.

Bhakti-Sūtra of Nārada contains 84 aphorisms. The last three aphorisms give such details as the names of some of the great Teachers of antiquity who propounded the doctrine of devotion for the benefit of the common man. As these details are of no theoretical or practical importance and it will be difficult for those who are not familiar with the Hindu scriptures to understand them, these three aphorisms have been left out.

I. K. TAIMNI

SELF-REALIZATION THROUGH LOVE

१. अथातो भक्ति व्याख्यास्यामः ।

athāto bhaktiṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ

(अथातो=अथ+अतः) अथ this word is generally used in introducing a subject अतः therefore (because devotion also is necessary for attaining Self-realization) भक्ति (the doctrine of) devotion व्याख्यास्यामः we shall expound.

1. As devotion towards God is necessary for attaining Self-realization let us expound the doctrine of *bhakti*.

The word devotion is usually used in a general sense and may represent giving up oneself for any cause or person but in the present context *bhakti* means devotion or love towards God. Any object of devotion on earth, however high it may be, is bound to be perishable, finite and not completely free from defects of any kind and devotion towards it is bound to be limited. Even the life and physical forms of *avatāras* towards which devotion of most devotees is directed are within the realm of time and space, and though they may help the devotees to develop devotion in the early stages, cannot be adequate for developing that true devotion which embraces everything in the manifest and the unmanifest and therefore frees the individual from the bondage of embodied existence. Besides this, there is a certain kind of artificiality and lack of realism about such devotion because we direct our devotion in this case to something which is outside and finite while that Reality which we really seek in these outer forms is hidden in its wholeness and full splendour within our own heart. Sooner or later, we have to go beyond the outer form and try to realize THAT which is hidden within the form and is the real object of our search. So, that all-pervading Reality which embraces and contains everything within Itself and which we commonly refer to as God is the only fit object for our devotion or *bhakti* and Nārada deals with the subject from this point of view.

The student should, however, be on his guard against taking all stories of personal devotion given in books like *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Bhāgavata* as literally true and therefore missing their real significance. In the first place many of these stories are really allegories which are meant, to present to the masses the highest truths of spiritual life in such a manner that the common man can understand and remember them easily. In the second place, although it appears that the devotion in these stories is directed towards a personality which is in the realm of time and space and therefore finite, the devotee has really in his mind the Reality which is infinite and embraces and contains everything in the Cosmos. The outer form is regarded merely as a symbol of the inner Reality and the devotion is directed really to this Reality. This distinction between the outer form and the inner Reality may not be present in a clearly defined form in the mind of the ordinary worshipper, but it is always there in his subconscious mind. The Hindus who use frequently such symbolic forms or forms of *avatāras* like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are not idol-worshippers as many who have studied Hinduism superficially imagine. Behind their apparent anthropomorphism is hidden a philosophy containing conceptions of the most profound nature and philosophic grandeur regarding the Ultimate Reality which is the object of worship and is generally referred to as Brahman. These facts have been explained in detail in *Introduction to Hindu Symbolism.*

२. सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेम रूपा ।

sā tvasmin paramaprema-rūpā

सा it (i.e. devotion) त्वस्मिन् (तु+अस्मिन्) तु but (i.e. this devotion is not directed towards any object or person but only towards God) अस्मिन् to Him परम intense, highest प्रेम love रूपा has the outer form of.

2. *Bhakti* or devotion to God has the form of intense love towards Him.

While devotion to any cause or person may not be of the nature of love but may take the form of determination to serve the cause or loyality to the person, true devotion to God which is referred to as *bhakti*, while it involves self-surrender is always accompanied by intense emotion of love towards Him. But this emotional love is only its outer expression, i.e. the form it takes in his outer behaviour in relation to God. There is a deeper aspect of this love which is referred to in the next aphorism.

३. अमृतस्वरूपा च ।

amṛtasvarūpā ca

अमृत nectar of immortality, the awareness of our eternal nature which raises us above the fear of decay and death स्वरूपा has the essential form of च and.

3. While the outer form of *bhakti* is emotional love, its innermost, essential form is awareness of our Real nature which is eternal and beyond the realm of decay and death.

This aphorism should be read along with the previous one as indicated by the use of the Sanskrit word *ca*. The second aphorism refers to the external form of *bhakti* in contradistinction to its essential form referred to in the third aphorism. Everything has two aspects of its nature, one as it appears to others who see it superficially from outside, and the other as it is known in its essential nature to those who experience it from within.

If we look at a devotee who has intense love for God from outside we find him generally exhibiting all the symptoms which are present in a person who has fallen deeply in love with another person. His mind is obsessed with ideas regarding the other person. He cries when there is upsurge of intense emotion in him. He feels forlorn when he is separated from the beloved.

This is the outer form of *bhakti*—its *rūpa*—which is generally present in a prominent form in the early stages of its development. But as *bhakti* becomes mature and brings the *bhakta* in closer and closer relation with God it assumes the form of a feeling of oneness with Him in greater and greater degree. And when this happens the outer symptoms tend to disappear to a great extent and are replaced by a state of constant awareness of unity with Him. And since He is eternal in His essential nature this awareness of unity results in the devotee also becoming increasingly aware of his eternal nature and ultimately remaining in that state, constantly in a state of oneness with Him. This is the essential form of *bhakti*—its *svarūpa*. The student should keep in mind the fine distinction between immortality which is still within the realm of time and eternity which is above time altogether.

४. यल्लब्ध्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवत्यमृतो भवति तृप्तो
भवति ।

yal labdhvā pumān siddho bhavaty amṛto bhavati
tṛpto bhavati

यल्लब्ध्वा (यत्+लब्ध्वा) यत् which (love of God) लब्ध्वा obtaining, attaining पुमान् man सिद्धः a pure and holy man possessing supernatural powers called *Siddhi-s* भवति becomes अमृतः immortal, eternal तृप्तः satisfied, Self-satisfied.

4. By attaining which man becomes a *Siddha*, immortal and Self-satisfied.

These results follow because his consciousness has become one with the consciousness of God. All kinds of powers are inherent in the Divine Consciousness which is eternal and contains everything in itself. When the consciousness of an individual becomes fused with the Divine Consciousness it naturally acquires all the attributes of Divine Consciousness and whatever is present in that all-embracing Consciousness. No special effort is required to gain anything and no desire is left to acquire anything because everything is already present in that Consciousness. We can desire and try to acquire only what we do not possess already.

५. यत् प्राप्य न किंचिद् न वाञ्छति न शोचति
न द्वेष्टि न रमते नोत्साही भवति ।

yat prāpya na kiṃcit na vāñchati na śocati na
dveṣṭi na ramate notsāhī bhavati

यत् which (love of God) प्राप्य obtaining, attaining न not किञ्चित् anything वाञ्छति desires न not शोचति laments, grieves न not द्वेष्टि hates, loathes न not रमते revels नोत्साही (न+उत्साही) न not उत्साही enthusiastic, zealous भवति becomes.

5. On attaining love of God he does not desire anything, does not feel grief, does not hate anything, does not rejoice at anything and does not become enthusiastic about anything.

All states of mind to which reference is made in this aphorism can be present only when an individual feels the lack of different things within himself. If his consciousness merges with the Divine Consciousness which contains everything in a potential form naturally he becomes Self-sufficient and cannot desire anything outside himself. And since he feels oneness with everything in the realm of manifestation he also cannot dislike or hate anything. Most of us do not realize the tremendous value of being Self-sufficient when we do not desire anything because the source of all desired objects is known to be within ourselves. Desirelessness is not a negative state of mind which creates a vacuum in our life. As desire acts as a cover over the Divine Consciousness which is hidden within our heart, desirelessness by removing this cover gives us awareness of this Divine Consciousness and our oneness with it.

६. यज् ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवत्यात्मारामो भवति ।

yaj jñātvā matto bhavati stabdho bhavaty ātmā-rāmo bhavati

यत् which (love of God) ज्ञात्वा knowing, realizing मत्तः mad, intoxicated with joy भवति becomes स्तब्धः quiet, still भवत्यात्मारामो (भवति+आत्मारामो) भवति becomes आत्मारामः Self-satisfied, with no tendency to go outside oneself for any kind of satisfaction भवति becomes.

6. By knowing which (God or the One Reality) he becomes intoxicated with joy, quiet and Self-satisfied.

This aphorism continues the idea of the last aphorism and gives some more features of the state of mind and feeling which results from Self-realization. The word *mattaḥ* in the present context does not really mean "mad" andis used merely to indicate intensity of inner joy which is felt by the individual who is completely overwhelmed when he finds himself immersed in the ocean of Divine love. As his love becomes mature this exuberance of emotional love gradually gives place to a state of intense love which is so deep that no outer indications of it are present and the person becomes quiet with his consciousness centred in itself. Not only is there no outer expression of this kind of love but no external stimulation is necessary to keep up its intensity. It is because this love is rooted in Divine love and derives its stimulation from this inexhaustible source of *ānanda* that it becomes independent of the external environment and the individual becomes Self-satisfied or Self-sufficient.

The *sādhaka* who wants to develop the kind of love with which this treatise deals must pause and ponder over this aphorism and the two previous aphorisms in order to grasp their real significance. This love has its source within the centre of one's own consciousness and has two aspects. In one of its aspects it is turned outwards and embraces everything in the external world because God is seen enshrined in the whole of the manifested universe. In the other aspect it is turned inwards and the individual is aware of that One Reality which exists beyond the centre of his consciousness in the realm of the unmanifest. The outward-turned love is the basis of altruism and compassion for all living creatures, and true human brotherhood of man is derived from that vision or rather awareness of oneness of all life. We talk of "forming" a nucleus of universal brotherhood of humanity. But brotherhood of man is not something which can be formed or created by man. It is a fact in nature and already exists, though we may not be aware of it or may not even recognize it. It is the most fundamental fact concerning human life. In fact, it is the most fundamental fact of life itself because all life is rooted in and derived from one source—the Divine Life pervading the whole universe.

The inward-turned love which is directed beyond the centre of our consciousness is the basis of that love of God with which this treatise deals. It is this love which gradually raises our consciousness into the realm of the eternal, makes us aware of our own Divinity and is called *bhakti* in Sanskrit. The three aphorisms we are dealing with indicate the results which follow when this love for the Divine wells up within our heart. They show us that within the heart of the universe and within our own heart is hidden the source of all kinds of love which is Love itself, and it is therefore possible to find this Love only by diving into the deeper recesses of our own heart. When we succeed in our effort and open up a channel between us and this source of all love then love begins to well up from within and to fill us with that supreme bliss which is inherent in it and is really another aspect of it. The wonderful thing about this love is that it is not directed towards any person or thing and does not depend upon the circumstances and environment of the individual through whom it radiates without any external stimulus and without any effort. It is like a natural spring with a hidden and inexhaustible source of water through which water continues to flow spontaneously even when there is no one to utilize it.

The student who wants to grasp the true significance of these aphorisms should grasp the important fact that love and happiness are indissolubly connected as are their opposites, hatred and unhappiness. Whenever and wherever the mind is suffused with love it is filled with bliss and it is this bliss which produces the conditions enumerated in the three aphorisms and makes the individual Self-sufficient and Self-contained. When this love is directed towards God who is the source of all love there is no limit to its intensity and the powers it may confer on the devotee as a result of his individual consciousness becoming more and more merged with the Divine Consciousness. The outer symptoms which appear in the beginning and show lack of control over the emotions are due to the overwhelming impact of the love and bliss on his mind and those who have never felt these emotions in an intense degree cannot understand them.

७. सा न काम्यमाना निरोधरूपत्वात् ।

sā na kāmyamānā nirodharūpatvāt

सा it न not काम्यमाना moved by desire, selfish **निरोधरूपत्वात्** because it is attained by the elimination of all worldly desires.

7. It is not motivated by desire because it finds expression in, and is attained by, the elimination of all worldly desires.

It should be obvious that true love of God cannot be motivated by any worldly desires because it can be attained only when these worldly desires have been gradually eliminated or rather transmuted into the one supreme desire to find and become one with the Divine Life hidden within us. This is also shown by the fact that when Divine love appears in the heart of a devotee and as a result of this he becomes Self-sufficient all desires disappear from his mind naturally without his making any special effort in this direction.

It must be pointed out however that what has been said above holds true only of the mature and utterly unselfish love which is referred to as *parama prema* in the subsequent aphorisms. This ultimate state of love for God is attained not suddenly but by passing through a number of phases in which selfishness and personal desires do play a definite but ever-decreasing role. But such is the power and mystery of this love that when we direct it to God even with a selfish motive the response from that Divine source not only fulfils our desire but has also partly the effect of purifying our nature and freeing it from the debasing influence of desire. It is this alchemy which by establishing a virtuous circle ultimately frees us completely from desires of all kinds and makes us Self-sufficient and Self-contained.

८. निरोधस्तु लोकवेद व्यापारस्य न्यासः ।

nirodhas tu lokaveda vyāpārasya-nyāsaḥ

निरोध: inhibition or elimination of desires तु but, on the contrary लोकवेदव्यापारस्य of performance of worldly and religious duties न्यासः renunciation by consecration to God.

8. But elimination of desires does not mean stopping the performance of worldly and religious duties but consecrating them to God.

Actions of an ordinary individual are generally motivated by desire and most of the activities in which he takes part have some personal end in view, whether he is conscious of this fact or not. When such an individual starts to develop desirelessness seriously it is possible he may stop doing all those things which are motivated by one desire or another. This aphorism is meant to warn the aspirant against this misconceived notion of desirelessness because this is bound to create chaos in his life and the social environment in which he is placed. He is enjoined to continue to discharge faithfully all those responsibilities which are a part of his duty and devolve upon him as a result of the particular circumstances in which he is placed by the Law of Karma or the relations he has formed with others. In this selection and elimination of his activities he has to use his own judgment which is guided by wisdom and not by personal prejudices and predilections.

९. तस्मिन्ननन्यता तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता च ।

tasminn ananyatā tadvirodhiṣūdāsīnatā ca

तस्मिन्ननन्यता (तस्मिन्+अनन्यता) तस्मिन् in Him अनन्यता undivided devotion तद्विरोधिषु towards all that is antagonistic to Him, or obstructs union with Him उदासीनता indifference, being unconcerned च and.

9. Desirelessness also means desiring nothing except Him and indifference towards all that is

antagonistic to Him, or causes obstruction to union with Him.

This aphorism further clarifies the nature of desirelessness which has to be developed by the devotee. This desirelessness does not mean that the devotee is not to desire even God. In fact, he has to desire God and God only, and has to adopt an attitude of indifference towards all that is antagonistic to Him. Lest the aspirant may misunderstand the significance of the two phrases in this aphorism their meanings are clarified in the next two aphorisms.

१०. अन्याश्रयाणां त्यागोऽनन्यता ।

anyāśrayāṇāṃ tyāgo 'nanyatā

अन्याश्रयाणां of all other supports or refuges त्याग: renunciation, giving up अनन्यता (is) single-heartedness.

10. Single-hearted devotion means giving up dependence on all other supports except the object of devotion.

The necessity of confining one's devotion to one single object of devotion is quite obvious. Concentration of mind and effort is necessary for gaining any object which requires earnestness and perseverance. This is particularly so when one is seeking union with the Divine Life which is hidden within our heart beyond the centre of our own consciousness. Having more than one object of devotion upon which we depend and towards which we direct our devotion is sure to distract the mind and make single-hearted devotion and intense concentration impossible.

In our worldly life we have to depend upon different objects or persons for supplying our multifarious needs because all of them are limited and imperfect and cannot provide everything we need. But this is not so in the case of God who is the source of everything in the world and can provide us with anything which we need and deserve. Not only this. When we surrender ourselves to Him completely and merge our consciousness with His Consciousness we become desireless, because on becoming established in the very source of satisfaction of all desires, there is nothing left to be desired.

११. लोकवेदेषु तदनुकूलाचरणं तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता ।

lokavedeṣu tad anukūlācaraṇaṃ tad virodhiṣū-dāsīnatā

लोकवेदेषु in worldly and religious (duties) तदनुकूलाचरणं conduct in accordance with तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता indifference to all that is antagonistic to, or obstructs union with Him.

11. Indifference towards all that is antagonistic to Him or obstructs union with Him does not preclude conduct in accordance with Him or performance of worldly and religious duties.

This aphorism is meant to warn the devotee against the misconception that in cultivating single-hearted devotion towards Him worldly and religious duties can interfere and should be given up. Devotion towards God is a matter of inner attitude and state of consciousness and should not interfere with our physical or even mental activities. As pointed out in *Śiva-Sūtra* these physical and mental activities take place in the periphery of our consciousness and the inner levels of consciousness remain unaffected by them. Since devotion towards God is directed inwards through the centre of our consciousness it involves really these inner levels of consciousness and what is happening in the periphery of consciousness should not interfere with it, if it is real and is cultivated in the right way. That is why it is possible to carry on our wordly and religious duties and keep the mind in a state of intense devotion at the same time.

It should be noted that emphasis is laid on the performance of worldly and religious duties so that leading a life of real devotion towards God does not encourage people, when cultivating devotion, to give up the performance of their duties and thus become the cause of disturbance and chaos in society. This will arouse the hostility of those who are affected and may incline them to condemn the doctrine and value of devotion itself.

१२. भवतु निश्चयदार्ढ्यादूर्ध्वं शास्त्ररक्षणम् ।

bhavatu niścaya-dārḍhyād ūrdhvaṃ śāstrarakṣaṇaṃ

भवतु let there be निश्चय faith, conviction दार्ढ्य firm, deep ऊर्ध्वं subsequent to, afterwards शास्त्र code of conduct, prescribed by social or religious obligations रक्षणम् preservation, guarding.

12. The observance of practices prescribed by religious and social obligations should be continued even after faith in and love of God has become firm and deep.

A stage comes in the life of a devotee when his love for God becomes so intense that his consciousness recedes into the inner levels of being and it becomes very difficult for him to carry on his usual activities which are a part of social and religious obligations. He is enjoined to carry on these activities as long as he possibly can. Of course, after a certain stage this becomes impossible owing to the intensity of his overwhelming love and he cannot help giving them up for a time until his love becomes quite mature and he regains his emotional and mental balance.

१३. अन्यथा पातित्यशङ्कया ।

anyathā pātityaśaṅkayā

अन्यथा otherwise **पातित्य** of a fall **शङ्कया** fear, risk.

13. Otherwise, there is a risk of his falling from the state of devotion he has attained already.

The devotee is enjoined to carry on his duties as long as he possibly can because otherwise there is risk of his going off the track and falling back into the attractions and desires of worldly life. Continued conformity with his social and religious obligations ensures his remaining on the right track because of the protection and guidance provided by *dharma*. If he leaves the path of *dharma* he is like a rudderless vessel drifting on the ocean of life without a compass. It is only when a devotee is very highly advanced and the clear light of intuition begins to illuminate his path that he can afford to do away with the reliable guidance provided by the prescribed code of conduct. He should also not forget that those who are advancing on the path of inner unfoldment of consciousness are invariably tested to discover and remove any weaknesses that may be left in their character.

१४. लोकोऽपि तावदेव भोजनादिव्यापारस्त्वाशरीरधारणावधि ।

loko 'pi tāvad eva bhojanādi-vyāpāras tv āśarīradhāraṇāvadhi

लोकः social customs and usages अपि also तावत् to that extent एव only भोजनादिव्यापारः the activities of eating, dressing, etc. तु on the other hand आशरीरधारणावधि for the purpose of keeping body and soul together.

14. Social customs and usages are to be observed only to the same extent as religious observances. But the activities needed to maintain the body, such as eating, dressing, etc. have to be continued as long as the body is alive.

It will be seen that the activities connected with the life of a devotee are divided into three categories; 1. religious observances, 2. observances of social customs and usages and 3. activities connected with the maintenance of the physical body.

Religious observances are to be carried on until the devotion becomes so mature, firm and deep-seated that the inner light of intuition is able to guide the devotee on the path he is treading and the life he is living. Social customs and usages are also to be observed as long as the observance of religious duties is necessary and can be given up along with the religious observances. But obviously, the devotee cannot ever dispense with the activities which are necessary for maintaining the physical body. These may appear trivial in comparison, but are essential for keeping the body alive and in a state of efficient functioning.

१५. तल्लक्षणानि वाच्यन्ते नानामतभेदात् ।

tal lakṣaṇāni vācyante nānāmatabhedāt

तल्लक्षणानि (तत्+लक्षणानि) तत् of that (devotion) लक्षणानि marks, indications वाच्यन्ते are being stated नाना diverse मत opinions भेदात् differences.

15. The external indications of love of God according to diverse opinions will now be stated.

The next four aphorisms attempt to describe the external indications of love of God. They deal with the subject in a rather superficial manner. In the first place, these indications can take innumerable forms, according to the temperaments and circumstances of the individual and the intensity of devotion. In the second place, the external indications are of no particular significance. It is the state of emotions, attitudes and conditions of mind which really matter and show the quality and intensity of devotion. In fact, when the devotee feels devotion of the most intense form he becomes quiet and absent-minded because his consciousness has receded into the deepest levels of mind. Considering the profound nature of the other aphorisms and the possibility of interpolations it is probable that these aphorisms were inserted later by someone to make the treatise more comprehensive. Such interpolations are not uncommon in treatises of this nature which have come down to us after passing through the course of centuries.

१६. पूजादिष्वनुराग इति पाराशर्यः ।

pujādiṣv anurāga iti pārāśaryaḥ

पूजादिषु in worship of the Lord अनुराग: attachment, ardour इति this particle is generally used to report the very words spoken or supposed to be spoken by some one as represented by the quotation marks in English, and considered to be generally accepted पाराशर्य: the disciple of the sage Parāśara.

16. Devotion may be indicated by ardour in the worship of the Lord according to the disciple of Parāśara.

१७. कथादिष्विति गर्गः।

kathādiṣv iti gargaḥ

कथादिषु in discourses on His glory and greatness इति thus गर्ग: according to Garga, a sage of that name.

17. According to Garga devotion may be indicated by the devotee giving frequently discourses on His glory and greatness.

१८. आत्मरत्यविरोधेनेति शाण्डिल्यः।

ātmaraty avirodheneti śāṇḍilyaḥ

आत्म the Self रति enjoyment of bliss in अविरोधेन unhindered इति a particle, thus शाण्डिल्य: according to Śandilya, a sage of that name.

18. According to Śāṇḍilya devotion may be indicated by unhindered enjoyment of bliss caused by the love of God.

१९. नारदस्तु तदर्पिताखिलाचारता तद्विस्मरणे
परमव्याकुलतेति।

nāradas tu tad-arpitākhilācāratā tad-vismaraṇe
paramavyākulateti

नारदः the heavenly saint who is supposed to have composed these aphorisms तु but तदर्पिताखिलाचारता the condition of having dedicated all observances whatsoever to Him तद्विस्मरणे in losing Him from memory परमव्याकुलता extreme uneasiness इति thus.

19. According to Nārada devotion is indicated by the condition of having dedicated all observances whatsoever to Him and by the feeling of extreme uneasiness in losing Him from memory.

२०. अस्त्येवमेवम् ।

astyevam evam

अस्ति exists एवमेवम् such and such.

20. There are such and such instances of this kind of devotion.

After giving the opinion of different *Ṛṣi-s* regarding the nature of devotion, the author gives instances of devotees taken from *Bhāgavata* which narrates the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and illustrates this intense kind of devotion in a very effective manner.

२१. यथा व्रजगोपिकानाम् ।

yathā brajagopikānām

यथा for instance व्रज of Vraja or Vrindāvan where Śrī Kṛṣṇa lived गोपिकानाम् the case of cow-maids of Vraja who exemplified perhaps in their lives the most intense type of love and devotion recorded in the Hindu scriptures.

21. For instance we have the case of the cow-maids of Vraja who exemplified in their lives the kind of devotion expounded in this treatise.

As has been pointed out before, there are many kinds of devotion. For example, there was the devotion of Hanūmān for Rāma as exemplified in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. But in this case the attitude of the devotee was that of a servant towards his master. In the case of *Gopi-s* of Vraja the devotion was of the nature of love which a lover bears towards her beloved, with the attitude which is referred to as *kānta bhāva* in Sanskrit.

२२. तत्रापि न माहात्म्यज्ञानविस्मृत्यपवादः ।

tatrāpi na māhātmyajñāna-vismṛty apavādaḥ

तत्र there, in the intense form of devotion shown by a *bhakta* towards God अपि even न not माहात्म्य greatness ज्ञान idea, knowledge विस्मृति forgetting अपवादः reproach, scandal.

22. Even in the intense devotion of a devotee felt towards an incarnation of God there should be no forgetting of the greatness or Divinity of the object of devotion in order to avoid reproach or scandal.

The life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as depicted in the *Bhāgavata* illustrates the truth of the above statement. The *Gopi-s*, though they loved him intensely were aware all the time of His divinity and so their love remained pure and above reproach. Without this attitude *bhakti* cannot become a means of spiritual development.

२३. तद्विहीनं जाराणामिव ।

tad-vihīnam jārāṇām iva

तद्विहीनं without the kind of attitude mentioned above जाराणाम् of a paramour or ordinary lover इव as.

23. Without the kind of attitude mentioned above the love of a *bhakta* will be like the passionate love of a paramour.

This aphorism is meant to warn the *bhakta* against allowing his love to degenerate into ordinary passionate love between man and woman which is common in human life.

२४. नास्त्येव तस्मिंस्तत्सुखसुखित्वम ।

nāsty eva tasmis tat-sukhasukhitvam

नास्त्येव (न+अस्ति+एव) न not अस्ति exists एव certainly तस्मिन् in that (kind of love) तत्सुखसुखित्वम् (तत्+सुख+सुखित्वम्) तत् of the beloved सुख happiness सुखित्वम् in the happiness.

24. What distinguishes true love from false passionate love is the fact that the passionate lover does not consider the happiness of the beloved as his sole concern but is mainly concerned about his own happiness.

२५. सा तु कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्योऽप्यधिकतरा ।

sā tu karma-jñāna-yogebhyo 'pyadhikatarā

सा it (the path of devotion) तु again, a particle used sometimes to mark superior quality कर्म ज्ञान योगेभ्यः than (the path of) action, knowledge and yoga (*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*) अपि even अधिकतरा higher, superior.

25. It (the path of devotion) is superior to that of action, knowledge and Yoga [of Patañjali]

There are three recognized paths of union with God or realization of the One Reality: those of action, knowledge and Yoga. Of these three, the path of *karma* or action is considered preparatory and those of *jñāna* and *bhakti* are the two main paths which are considered capable of enabling the aspirant to reach the final goal. According to Nārada the path of *bhakti* which is expounded in this treatise is superior to that of *jñāna*. Śaṃkara also has said that devotion is the greatest of all means of release from the bondage of *saṃsāra* as expressed in the following Sanskrit statement:

मोक्षसाधनसामग्र्याः भक्तिरेव गरीयसी।

(*mokṣasādhana sāmagrayāḥ bhaktir eva garīyasī*)

Such statements involving comparisons of different paths leading ultimately to union with God should not be taken too seriously. Success in such undertakings requires a total effort of all our faculties because life cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. Different kinds of efforts are generally needed in different phases of our spiritual development and the characteristic which predominates in the effort made in a particular life appears to be the " path " which the aspirant is treading.

२६. फलरूपत्वात्।

phala-rūpatvāt

फल result रूपत्वात् on account of taking the form of.

26. Because the result of making the effort to develop devotion is more intense devotion.

This aphorism points out the reason why the path of devotion is considered higher than the other paths mentioned in the previous aphorism. The meaning of this enigmatic aphorism will become clear if we understand how a " virtuous circle " which is the opposite of a " vicious circle " is established. When the devotee tries to develop devotion and his devotion becomes more intense as a result, this enables him to make his further effort at a higher level and thus reach a still more intense state of devotion. This process of progressive reinforcement goes on until there is fusion of the consciousness of the devotee with the Divine Consciousness in an ecstasy and Self-realization takes place.

२७. ईश्वरस्याप्यभिमानिद्वेषित्वाद् दैन्यप्रियत्वाच्च ।

Īśvarasyāpy abhimāni-dveṣitvād dainya-priyatvāc ca

ईश्वरस्य of God अपि also अभिमानिद्वेषित्वाद् दैन्यप्रियत्वात् on account of aversion to egotism and love of meekness च and.

27. The path of devotion is higher than others also because of God's aversion to egotism and love of meekness.

This aphorism gives another reason why the author considers the path of devotion higher than the path of action or knowledge. Those who take to the path of action are very liable to develop the sense of egotism on account of considering themselves as the source of power instead of merely instruments of the Divine Power which flows through them for the accomplishment of certain purpose in the Divine Plan. This egotism clouds their sense of discrimination, and by setting up a vicious circle, sets them on the path of ambition which leads them ultimately to ruin from the spiritual point of view. The same thing can happen to those who take to the path of knowledge or *jñāna*. Mistaking mere learning for real knowledge of the inner realities of life, and lacking spiritual perception, they become very proud of their learning and begin to consider themselves superior to their fellowmen. This state of mind results in their sinking into greater ignorance and illusions of life as has been pointed out very effectively in one of the *ślokas* of *Īsāvasyopaniṣad*.

The path of devotion is free from these dangers. Firstly, because the very technique of developing devotion is based upon the elimination of all worldly desires or transmitting them into the one desire to find God who is hidden within their heart. Secondly, the final aim of the devotee is to merge his consciousness with the Divine Consciousness by gradually attenuating his " I " ness. So, there is very little scope for the development of that egotism which serves as a barrier between him and his God and may result in his gradually leaving the path of Self-realization altogether. The metaphor which has been used to warn the aspirant against the danger of developing egotism should not make him think that there can be aversion or favouritism in the Divine Consciousness. The very nature of Divine Consciousness which embraces and contains everything in the manifested universe is such that these defects cannot be present in it even in traces. And those Great Beings whose consciousness is established in the world of Reality must also necessarily be free from these human weaknesses.

२८. तस्या ज्ञानमेव साधनमित्येके ।

tasyā jñānameva sādhanam ity eke

तस्याः its (of devotion) ज्ञानम् knowledge एव alone साधनम् means of developing इति thus एके some (एक is used in the plural in the sense of "some," its correlative being अन्य meaning "others".)

28. (Some say) that devotion can be developed only through *jñāna* or knowledge.

२९. अन्योन्याश्रयत्वमित्येके ।

anyonyāśrayatvam ity eke

अन्योन्याश्रयत्वम् mutual dependence (of knowledge and devotion) इति so एके some others.

29. Others say that they are mutually dependent.

The above two aphorisms are meant to indicate the relation of knowledge and devotion. In our human relations, knowing of one person by another does not necessarily mean intensification of devotion for that person. Closer contact with him may reveal his weaknesses and as well as strong points in his character, so the result is unpredictable. But in the relation of a devotee with God this possibility does not exist, for he comes into closer contact with a Reality which is Perfect or without any blemishes. So the more a devotee knows God by unification of consciousness the more his devotion towards Him is bound to grow. And in its turn, intensification of devotion by bringing about a closer unification of consciousness will result in a deeper knowledge of that Supreme Reality. Devotion and knowledge thus continue to reinforce each other until there is perfect unification of the two and they merge into a state of consciousness in which the two become indistinguishable.

३०. स्वयं फलरूपतेति ब्रह्मकुमारः ।

svayaṃ phalarūpateti brahmakumāraḥ

स्वयं of itself फलरूपता reappearance as fruit इति so ब्रह्मकुमारः son of Brahmā i.e. Nārada, the author of this treatise.

30. According to Nārada, devotion is its own fruit.

This aphorism gives the idea of aphorism 26 in a different context and may be considered to provide the reason why devotion is its own fruit and it is only by practising devotion that we can intensify our devotion to God gradually until the consciousness of the devotee merges with the Consciousness of God and the two become indistinguishable.

There are some very interesting stories in the *Bhāgavata* which throw light on this unification of consciousness and the results which follow from it. In one of these stories Rādhā, the ideal lover of Srī Kṛṣṇa is shown as seeking Him on one occasion when He disappeared from her side and left her in an agony of separation which is referred to as *viraha* in Sanskrit. Rādhā runs from place to place in the woods of Vṛndāvan and asks every *Gopī* or cow-maid whom she meets about the whereabouts of Kṛṣṇa. But the question she asks is not: " Where is Kṛṣṇa? " but " Where is Rādhā ?". Her consciousness has become so fused with the consciousness of Kṛṣṇa that in this confusion she has lost the sense of her own identity and mixes it up with that of Kṛṣṇa. Only those who have experienced the ecstasy of intense love can appreciate the beauty of this story. Its profound significance will hardly be noticed by the hard-boiled, intellectual philosopher who talks about God from the academic point of view and analyses the nature of this Reality like a biologist dissecting an animal on his table.

३१. राजगृहभोजनादिषु तथैव दृष्टत्वात् ।

rajagṛha-bhojanādiṣu tathaiva dṛṣṭatvāt

राजगृह in the royal household भोजनादिषु in the matter of feeding and bestowing other favours तथा the same एव and nothing else दृष्टत्वात् having been seen.

31. The same phenomenon having been seen in a royal household in the matter of feeding and bestowing other favours.

३२. न तेन राजपरितोषः क्षुच्छान्तिर्वा ।

na tena rājaparitoṣaḥ kṣucchāntir vā

न not तेन for this or in this राजपरितोषः king's satisfaction, pleasure क्षुच्छान्तिः satisfaction of hunger or other desires वा or.

32. In this there is neither satisfaction for the king nor for those who are fed or receive other favours.

This aphorism and the previous one are meant to illustrate that without real devotion there is neither satisfaction for God nor for those who receive His favours. In a royal household all servants get favours of the king but only those who are near and dear to him get his love and so real happiness. God in His bounty grants to everyone what he desires. It is a law of life that everyone gets ultimately what he desires. But in the satisfaction of these desires there is no real happiness because devotion or love is absent. It is possible to gain pleasures and joys from the satisfaction of worldly desires because they have their source in the lower levels of man's being—his mind and emotions. But real happiness has its source in the deepest realms of his being, in his spiritual nature. These realms can be entered into through gaining at least partial awareness of our Real nature which we share with the Divine nature. The only way of gaining this kind of awareness is through love or devotion. That is why the aspirant is enjoined to adopt the path of devotion in the next aphorism.

३३. तस्मात् सैव ग्राह्या मुमुक्षुभिः ।

tasmāt saiva grāhyā mumukṣubhiḥ

तस्मात् therefore सा that (devotion) एव alone, to the exclusion of others (knowledge etc.) ग्राह्या worthy of being adopted or gained मुमुक्षुभिः by those who desire release from the bondage of *saṃsāra*.

33. Therefore the path of devotion should be adopted exclusively by those who desire to gain freedom from the limitations and illusions of worldly life.

३४. तस्याः साधनानि गायन्त्याचार्याः ।

tasyāḥ sādhanāni gāyantyācāryāḥ

तस्याः its (of devotion) साधनानि means of developing गायन्ति sing, recite आचार्याः teachers of this subject of devotion.

34. In the following aphorisms are indicated the means of developing devotion according to the teachers of this subject.

It was pointed out in aphorisms 26 and 30 that devotion is its own means of development. This does not mean that those in whom devotion to the Lord is weak or even completely absent cannot hope to develop this essential characteristic for gaining freedom from the bondage of *saṃsāra*, or the illusions of the worldly life. The doctrine of devotion includes a regular course of training for the cultivation of devotion and if this is followed earnestly and perseveringly this essential qualification for developing their spiritual nature can be developed gradually to a sufficient extent to enable them to use devotion itself for developing devotion in a more intensive form, until the consciousness of the devotee becomes fused with the object of devotion. The spark of devotion can be fanned into a roaring flame which burns down everything in the realm of the unreal and leaves nothing but the One Reality.

३५. तत्तु विषयत्यागात् सङ्गत्यागाच्च ।

tat tu viṣayatyāgāt saṅgatyāgāc ca

तत् that, i.e. love of God तु and now, sometimes it is used as an emphatic particle विषयत्यागात् renunciation of the objects which we hold for the sake of pleasure सङ्गत्यागात् giving up even attachment for these objects च and.

35. The first means of developing devotion to God is to renounce worldly objects or at least attachment to them. The latter is essential and really more important.

God is hidden within the centre of our own consciousness while worldly objects are present in the world outside. As long as our interest and attention is directed outwards to these external objects of desire, the mind cannot be made to turn inwards towards its source, and being thus unable to experience the knowledge and bliss which is hidden in that source, cannot develop devotion towards Him.

३६. अव्यावृत्तभजनात् ।

avyāvṛtta-bhajanāt

अ without व्यावृत्त separated, interrupted भजनात् adoration, remembrance.

36. Devotion is also cultivated most effectively by constant and uninterrupted adoration and remembrance of God.

This aphorism should be studied along with the previous one in which renunciation of and non-attachment to worldly objects and pursuits is enjoined. The human mind cannot remain in a vacuum for any length of time. If the objects of the world are to be renounced and mind turned away from them there must be something greater to take their place; otherwise, it will sooner or later revert to its previous condition and plunge into the attractions and pursuits of the worldly life with redoubled vigour as a reaction from the temporary abstinence from them. What is to take their place for one who wants to bring about a unification of consciousness with the Divine Consciousness? Of course, that Reality which they are seeking. The mind should be directed towards God and should be constantly occupied with thoughts connected with Him and with the methods of drawing closer to Him.

There are two points which should be noted in this connection. Many people in whom devotion is not yet developed, and who thus want some excuse for not making a change in their life, come out with the objection that they have to do work in the outer world either to earn their livelihood or to promote some cause for the promotion of human welfare. These people should know that this constant remembrance and adoration which is necessary for the cultivation of devotion does not mean that they should retire from the world, give up their worldly duties and shut themselves up in a room in order to gain their objective. It would be absurd for any one to recommend such a course of action which is impossible in the case of the vast majority of people, even if they had the necessary earnestness to adopt this kind of life.

In order to understand how the activities in the outer world in which the common man has to take part and the cultivation of this constant remembrance can be reconciled it should be remembered that the human mind has a peculiar constitution and can function at different levels and be engaged with different activities at the same time. So, the work in the outer world can be carried on simultaneously with this constant remembrance and effort to draw closer to God. This is not only possible but the knack of doing this must be acquired by every aspirant.

The second point which should be noted in this connection is the absurdity of propagating a negative philosophy and mode of leading the spiritual life without at the same time placing before the aspirant a positive and dynamic ideal and object of achievement. It has become fashionable and common these days to talk in general and vague terms about the problems of spiritual life, without indicating what is the aim and purpose of all this effort which is like beating about the bush without trying to penetrate into the bush to find out what is hidden within it. This inviting people to move about in a cloud of uncertainties and generalities is all the more strange because true Occultism places before human beings a very definite and tremendous object of achievement—Self-realization—which is not only desirable but our inevitable destiny and the only means available for freeing ourselves permanently from the illusions and miseries of life.

The fact of the matter is that those who talk in these vague and general terms do not themselves realize the tremendous significance and importance of what they are advocating, and know that this kind of vague idealism is likely to make a popular appeal and arouse the superficial interest of the common man who does not really want to do anything to change his mode of living and is alarmed at the prospect of adopting a life involving real self-discipline for the destruction of the false ego. The achievement of a definite object in the field of spiritual endeavour poses a challenge to our life; theoretical acceptance of a high ideal does not. So, we have been going on talking in terms of vague idealism and can go on like this for centuries without anybody being the wiser and closer to his professed ideal. But let us be clear in our mind about one thing. For acquiring anything real in life we have to pay its price, the more valuable a thing the higher its price to be paid. Nature gives us nothing for doing nothing and sacrificing nothing.

३७. लोकेऽपि भगवद्गुणश्रवण-कीर्तनात् ।

loke 'pi bhagvad-guṇaśravaṇa-kīrtanāt

लोके in the world, among mankind **अपि** also **भगवद्** of the **Lord** **गुण** attributes, nature **श्रवण** listening, hearing **कीर्तनात**

talking about, giving discourse on, singing songs and hymns about God.

37. Another method of developing devotion is giving discourses on, or singing hymns, songs, etc., or listening to such discourses and hymns, etc.

The deeper significance of this aphorism should be understood if we are to realize its importance and effectiveness in cultivating devotion. Merely giving religious discourses, or listening to them is of very little importance. Thousands of preachers are giving sermons in churches every Sunday, thousands of learned *sādhus* or *saṃnyasis* are giving discourses in gatherings organized for this purpose or in *āśramas* established everywhere to promote spirituality in the world. But how effective are such activities in making people more spiritual and in promoting real devotion in the hearers? Very little. Why? Because all this work is done at a very superficial level and as a matter of routine. It does not touch their hearts and therefore does not fan the spark of devotion hidden within every human heart into a flame which gives the light of wisdom and the warmth of spiritual inspiration to those who take part in these activities.

I have moved among groups of people who profess high ideals of spiritual life and felt amused at the sudden change which takes place when the formalities of giving religious lectures or going through rituals have come to an end. People start chatting and discussing all kinds of things which have no relation with what they had gathered to understand and realize in some measure, thus showing by their behaviour that they are not really interested in these things concerning the inner and the Real life of man and want merely the satisfaction of feeling that they have done their duty towards God.

What would happen if all of us were really and intensely interested in these things concerning God? Wherever we meet, whether there is a lecture or symposium or not, since our minds are charged with devotion towards Him and it is He who is the real object of interest and pursuit for us we would start talking about Him, and matters connected with Him. When politicians meet they invariably start talking politics. When scientists meet their conversation turns naturally towards discussing scientific problems. When members of a family meet they talk about their personal problems connected with the family. But when people who profess not only belief in God but their earnest desire to find Him, meet, what do they generally talk about? About everything under the sun except God.

It is this state of mind and intensity of interest which the present aphorism expects the real devotees of God to cultivate so that whenever and wherever they meet their mind and its expression in conversation or discussions turns naturally towards the spiritual matters in which they should have constant and abiding interest.

३८. मुख्यतस्तु महत् कृपयैव भगवद्-कृपालेशाद्वा ।

mukhyatas tu mahat-kṛpayaiva bhagavad-kṛipā-
leśād vā

मुख्यतः chiefly तु but महत् of the Great Ones कृपया by the grace of एव surely भगवत् Divine कृपा grace, compassion लेशात् by the mere touch of वा or.

38. But devotion is acquired chiefly and surely by the grace of the Great Ones or the touch of Divine compassion.

There are two points to be noted in trying to understand the significance of this important aphorism. Firstly, that the consciousness of the Great Ones is in union with the Divine Consciousness and therefore they are to be considered merely as the instruments of the Divine Life. Their grace should therefore also be considered as the expression of Divine compassion. Secondly, that Divine compassion or grace is not an accidental thing or the result of any kind of favouritism on the part of God. It is the natural result of the devotion which is felt and directed by the devotee towards God. It descends upon a devotee in response to his intense love and self-surrender to God.

The reason why it appears sometimes to descend upon him without any previous effort on his part lies in the fact that the force of Divine compassion generated by the devotion of the devotee is not generally discharged immediately but tends to accumulate and increase in intensity in the invisible realms until the mental barrier between the devotee and the object of devotion breaks down and the devotee is flooded suddenly and apparently without cause by Divine grace. This is not unlike the phenomenon which takes place when lightning strikes an object on earth.

३९. महत् सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ।

mahat-saṅgastu durlabho 'gamyo 'moghaś ca

महत् of the Great Ones सङ्ग: companionship, personal contact तु but दुर्लभ: difficult to obtain अगम्य: inscrutable, of unassignable cause अमोघ: infallible च and.

39. It is difficult to come into personal contact with the Great Ones and to say definitely how and when

an individual may be taken into Their company. But once this personal contact is obtained it is infallible in its operation.

Although it is not possible to say definitely when and how a particular individual will be taken into the company of the Great Ones, still, there are certain facts in this connection which the aspirant will do well to keep in mind. In the first place, he should remember that being in touch with Reality Their consciousness functions and their life is lived at a much higher level than that of the ordinary individual and it is only those who are properly qualified to come into touch with them that can succeed in their efforts to do so. It is only they who can decide whether he is so qualified and whether the circumstances are favourable for taking him into their company or even for bringing him in closer contact with them. All that he can do is to purify his mind and to live in such a way that he becomes worthy of this great privilege. In the second place, the aspirant should remember that personal contact does not necessarily mean physical contact. The physical body is only our outermost vehicle through which we function on the physical plane. There are subtler planes on which we function through our subtler vehicles. Contact on those planes is of far greater importance and significance and can be far more intimate than on the physical. Two people living poles apart can be in closer contact with each other if there is spiritual affinity between them and they have developed the necessary faculties to communicate with each other than two others who live together on the physical plane. The *Mahātmās* to whom we generally refer to as the Masters of Wisdom live far apart all over the world in isolated and in many cases inaccessible places and yet are in the most intimate touch with one another. They can also keep in touch with their advanced disciples and utilize other workers devoted to them from wherever they live in their physical body.

This kind of close association with them is difficult to obtain but if any individual succeeds in obtaining this privilege it is of inestimable benefit to him. The subtler vibrations which emanate from their vehicles and the spiritual forces which are constantly pouring out through them from the higher planes purify and attune those who come in contact with them and raise them also gradually to a higher level of being. But only those who are sufficiently pure and qualified to bear the impact of these forces can derive benefit from such a close contact which brings out not only the best in them but also their hidden weaknesses. So the best course for an aspirant is not to hanker after personal contact with them and wander from *āśrama* to *āśrama* in search for Them but try to establish contact with the Divine Life which is hidden within his own heart. This is not only more feasible but the most effective way of coming into touch with all the Great Ones whose consciousness is permanently established in the Divine Consciousness.

४०. लभ्यतेऽपि तत्-कृपयेव ।

labhyate 'pi tat-kṛpayaiva

लभ्यते is obtained (this personal contact) अपि also तत्-कृपया by His (i.e. God's) grace एव only.

40. This personal contact with the Great Ones can be obtained only by the grace of God.

What this aphorism is meant to emphasize is the fact that in order to obtain personal contact with the Great Ones the best course is to establish contact with the Divine Life which is hidden within our own heart, is nearest to us, and therefore more easily accessible. If we succeed in doing so we rise to their level and come in contact with them naturally by virtue of the affinity we have developed with them. The grace of God referred to above is not something which comes to an individual accidentally or arbitrarily but is the result of the privilege he has earned by his own efforts to raise his life to the required high level of living and being.

४१. तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात् ।

tasmin taj-jane bhedābhāvāt

तस्मिन् in Him तज्जने (तत्+जने) in His man or devotee who has become one with Him भेद distinction अभावात् on account of absence of.

41. Because there is no distinction between Him and those whose consciousness is established within the Divine consciousness.

As has been pointed out before the consciousness of an individual fuses with the Divine Consciousness on Self-realization. That is why those who are able to bring about union of their consciousness with the Divine Consciousness not only become like God but also His instruments through which His help and grace can descend on his devotees. It should however be remembered that becoming like God does not mean exercising the functions of God but merely acquiring Divine attributes in greater or lesser degree according to the stage of unfoldment of consciousness reached by the individual.

४२. तदेव साध्यतां तदेव साध्यताम् ।

tad eva sādhyatāṁ tad eva sādhyatām

तत् that (love of God) एव alone साध्यताम् should be cultivated or striven after.

42. (Therefore) cultivate love of God alone, love of God alone.

As the Great Ones are expressions and instruments of the Divine Life and Consciousness and their grace descends upon His devotees along with the grace of God, the devotee should try to cultivate love of God alone. Why this course is recommended should be quite clear from what has been stated in the previous aphorisms. In this way he ensures obtaining not only the grace of God but also of the Great Ones. Besides this, since God is enshrined in our own heart, He is more easily accessible and nearer to us than any other embodiment of Divine Life can be. In Self-realization our individual Spirit comes in direct contact with the Supreme Spirit but if we try to find God in some one else, the bodies can serve as a barrier and hindrance between the two.

The fact which should be kept in mind is that we should be able to raise our consciousness to the level of *Ātmā*. In that state we are aware not only of our own Real nature but also of the Reality hidden within the heart of every human being and also the One Reality of which each individual Monad is a separate and unique expression. For, at that level there is perfect unification of consciousness and one sees unity in diversity, or One and the Many at the same time. There is one further stage in which the Monad penetrates through the centre of his own consciousness and emerges into the realm of the One Reality. In this state the consciousness of the Yogi expands to embrace the whole universe and all distinctions of any kind disappear as expressed so beautifully in aphorism 15 of *Pratyabhijñā Hṛdayam.*

४३. दुःसङ्गः सर्वथैव त्याज्यः ।

duḥsaṅgaḥ sarvathaiva tyājyaḥ

दुःसङ्गः means evil company, but in the present context it would be more appropriate to consider it as association with evil tendencies सर्वथा in every way, at all times एव certainly त्याज्यः (is) to be given up, to be shunned.

43. Evil company should be shunned and given up, as far as possible, at all times.

The Sanskrit phrase *sat-saṅga* is used very frequently in circles of religious-minded Hindus for meeting together of such people for the purpose of discussing matters of spiritual life. But this is only its superficial meaning which is adopted naturally by those whose interest in problems of spiritual life is superficial. The real meaning of *sat-saṅga* is " association with *Sat* " or keeping the mind occupied with questions concerning the One Reality which is hidden within our heart and which is the ultimate object of pursuit by all earnest aspirants. It is only by constantly pondering these problems of vital importance to them that they can develop the necessary attitude and permanent mood in which devotion can be developed.

In the same way *duḥ-saṅga* which means the opposite *sat-saṅga* is used generally to mean " association with people with evil tendencies in them ". But in its deeper significance it stands for " association with evil tendencies in human nature " which retard our progress on the path of spiritual evolution, and if they are of a serious nature and deep-seated, block it temporarily. That is why purification of our lower nature by rigorous self-discipline and the elimination of all such habits and tendencies is a necessary part of all systems of spiritual culture which aim really at the unfoldment of our spiritual potentialities and do not merely make a pretence of doing so. In fact, the emphasis which is laid by teachers and associations which advocate the necessity of living the spiritual or religious life and the high standard of conduct which is demanded and exacted from their followers provides a very good criterion by which to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious teachings.

४४. काम-क्रोध-मोह-स्मृतिभ्रंश-बुद्धिनाश-सर्वनाश-
कारणत्वात् ।

kāma-krodha-moha-smṛtibhraṃśa-buddhināśa-
sarvanāśa-kāraṇatvāt

काम desire, lust क्रोध anger मोह bewilderment caused by infatuation with some person or worldly object स्मृतिभ्रंश lapse of memory or temporarily forgetting our spiritual ideal बुद्धिनाश clouding or loss of our spiritual faculty of discrimination सर्वनाश loss of everything which matters in life कारणत्वात् being the cause of.

44. Because association with evil persons or tendencies tends to develop lust, anger, infatuation with worldly objects, forgetting of our spiritual ideals, and loss of *viveka*, and this results ultimately in the total ruin of our spiritual life and potentialities.

This aphorism is of great importance not because it refers to some evil tendencies and the necessity of weeding them out from our character but because it traces the chain of cause and effects which begins with these tendencies and results ultimately in ruining the life of the individual. The primary effect of these evil tendencies is to make the individual forget his spiritual ideals. He forgets gradually the ideal of spiritual life which he had placed before himself after considering the illusions and limitations of human life and the means of attaining that ideal. This awareness of the true nature of human life and its miseries had dawned upon his mind on going through much suffering and the desire to avoid that suffering in the future. If he continues to indulge in his weaknesses and evil tendencies or reverts to them after eliminating them to some extent, he loses again this awareness, gets muddled up and involved in the vicious circle which is set up in which evil doing clouds our faculty of *viveka* and the weakening of this faculty leads to more serious kind of evil doing.

It is very important to remember that the faculty of spiritual discrimination or *buddhi* is the only guide within us which enables us to distinguish between right and wrong and to do the right under all circumstances even though it puts us at a temporary disadvantage or even causes some loss or suffering. If we live according to this basic principle of spiritual life, become *dharma-niṣṭha* or firmly established in *dharma* or righteousness and become immune to evil tendencies, then the faculty of discrimination remains undimmed all the time, and we can live henceforth our life free from illusions and miseries which arise from evil doing.

On the other hand, if we indulge in evil doing then the *buddhi* or faculty of spiritual discrimination becomes more and more dimmed and consequently the tendency to do evil becomes stronger and stronger, resulting ultimately in the complete ruin of our life from the spiritual point of view. We may continue to prosper and lead a successful life from the worldly point of view but the effects of evil doing continue piling up steadily in the invisible realms of Nature and the day must come when the dam bursts and plays havoc with our life. The deterioration in our nature would be much more rapid than it generally is but for the fact that the fear of being exposed or being caught and punished by law keeps these tendencies in check to some extent and prevents our going down the inclined plane very rapidly. But unless we realize the danger inherent in evil doing and thinking and abstain from these tendencies we continue to move slowly or rapidly towards the inevitable end called *sarva-nāśa*.

४५. तरङ्गायिता अपीमे सङ्गात् समुद्रायन्ति ।

taraṅgāyitā apīme saṅgāt samudrāyanti

तरङ्गायिता playing only in feeble ripples अपि even इमे these सङ्गात् in consequence of evil association समुद्रायन्ति begin to behave like a turbulent sea.

45. These evil tendencies which are feeble and play like ripples in the beginning ultimately begin to behave like a turbulent sea by association with evil persons or evil thought and action.

This aphorism expresses and emphasizes in the form of a beautiful metaphor the truth pointed out in the last aphorism. Many evil tendencies which are present in a latent form in our nature, and will remain in that condition, become stimulated and assume gigantic proportions under the impact of evil associations of various kinds. The mere fact that we do not indulge in them does not make us immune to them. How the very potentiality for these tendencies can be destroyed has been expressed very clearly and aptly in aphorisms II-10, 11 and 33 of the *Yoga-Sūtras*.

It will also be seen how both good and evil tendencies tend to be strengthened by indulging in them and allowing evil thoughts to enter the mind. Devotion is strengthened by thought and action which promotes devotion and so are the emotions of anger, lust, etc. This natural law can be utilized both for the promotion of good tendencies and suppression or rather elimination of evil tendencies.

४६. कस्तरति कस्तरति मायां? यः सङ्गंत्यजति
यो महानुभावं सेवते निर्ममो भवति ।

kas tarati kas tarati māyām? yaḥ saṅga tyajati
yo mahānubhāvam sevate nirmamo bhavati

कस्तरति (कः+तरति) who crosses over कस्तरति (कः+तरति) who crosses over मायाम् the Great Illusion, the illusory world created by Māyā यः who सङ्गं attachment, desire, evil association referred to in previous aphorisms त्यजति gives up, renounces यो who महानुभावं the Great Ones सेवते serves निर्ममः devoid of "my"-ness, selfless भवति becomes.

46. Who crosses over the ocean of *saṃsāra*, the world created by the illusion of *Māyā*? Who crosses over the ocean of *saṃsāra*, the world created by the illusion of *Māyā*? He who gives up the attachment to worldly objects and pursuits. He who serves faithfully the Great Ones. He who becomes selfless or without the sense of "I" or "my"-ness.

After dealing with the necessity of eliminating from one's character the cruder forms of evil tendencies referred to in the previous aphorisms the author now points out the necessity of going further and developing some traits in his character which are positive and of a subtler nature. This work can be accomplished only when the lower nature has been purified to a sufficient degree and the faculty of *viveka* or spiritual discrimination has begun to function. The three traits mentioned in this aphorism are non-attachment, service to the Great Ones and selflessness. Non-attachment or freedom from desires for worldly objects and pursuits is necessary because their attractions bind us down to the lower worlds and prevent consciousness from penetrating into the subtler realms of being. Service of the Great Ones is necessary not only because in this way we draw nearer to them but also because they are engaged all the time in doing altruistic work and we also learn by their precept and example to devote ourselves to the work of serving our fellow men according to our capacity and circumstances. Service of the Great Ones does not necessarily mean ministering to the personal physical needs of holy men as is supposed by the large majority of orthodox Hindus. The necessity of being selfless is obvious. One who is selfish is bound to be self-centred and his interests and sympathies are bound to be confined to himself or those who are near and dear to him. This prevents the expansion of his consciousness which is destined ultimately to expand and embrace the whole universe.

४७. यो विविक्तस्थानं सेवते यो लोकबन्धमुन्मूलयति
निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवति यो योगक्षेमं त्यजति ।

yo vivikta-sthānam sevate yo loka-bandham unmūla-
yati nistraiguṇyo bhavati yo yogakṣemaṃ tyajati

यः who विविक्तस्थानं secluded or private place सेवते resorts to, lives in लोकबन्धं worldly bonds उन्मूलयति roots out निस्त्रैगुण्यो above the influence of the three well-known *guṇas* भवति becomes योगक्षेमं reliance for one's security on worldly possessions त्यजति renounces, gives up.

47. (He crosses over the ocean of *saṃsāra*) who lives a retired life, who roots out worldly bonds, who rises above the influence of the three *guṇas*, and who gives up reliance on worldly possessions for his security.

This aphorism is not to be taken in its literal sense but the aspirant should try to grasp the spirit behind it and try to live his life in accordance with that as far as possible. The conditions in the modern world are so different these days from what they were when the treatise was written that such adjustments are inevitable and unavoidable. Leading a spiritual life does not mean following a rigid code of conduct prescribed by a teacher or religion but living intelligently according to the laws of the inner life of the Spirit taking into account our circumstances in which we find ourselves. This does not however mean freedom to make compromises with evil. We must be alert and determined to distinguish between right and wrong and do the right under all circumstances even though it may involve us in temporary inconvenience or loss. This will not only ensure our faculty of discrimination remaining unclouded and giving us correct guidance in living our life but prevent our getting involved in troubles of various kinds. The idea that we are free to do what we like as long as we can avoid getting into the clutches of ordinary law is dangerous and untenable in a world which is governed not only by physical laws but also by moral and spiritual laws.

४८. यः कर्मफलं त्यजति कर्माणि संन्यस्यति ततो
निर्द्वन्द्वो भवति ।

yaḥ karmaphalam tyajati karmāṇi saṃnyasyati
tato nirdvandvo bhavati

यः who कर्मफलं the fruits of action त्यजति gives up कर्माणि actions संन्यस्यति dedicates to God ततः thereby निर्द्वन्द्वः free from the influence of the pairs of opposites भवति becomes.

48. Who renounces the fruits of actions, who dedicates all actions to God and thereby becomes free from the influence of the pairs of opposites.

In order to find God one has to cultivate a state of mind in which there is no disturbance. In order that there may be no disturbance he must remove the cause of disturbances which are constantly upsetting its balance. This cause is the attachment to the fruits of actions which we perform for gaining objects of desire. It is because our actions are motivated by desire that we are attached to their fruits and are thereby affected by what happens as a result of these actions. Not only are we affected by what happens as a result of these actions but produce *kārmic* results which are a source of bondage to the lower worlds. The only way of avoiding this chain of causes and effects which is set up is to perform actions without any personal desire of gain but only to fulfil our obligations in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. This attitude can be developed by habitually dedicating all our actions to God as has been explained so clearly in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

४९. यो वेदानपि संन्यस्यति केवलमविच्छिन्नानुरागम् लभते ।

yo vedān api saṃnyasyati kevalam avicchinnānurāgam labhate

यः who वेदान् the injunctions of the sacred scriptures अपि even संन्यस्यति lays aside केवलम् undivided अविच्छिन्न uninterrupted अनुरागम् devotion, attachment caused by love लभते attains.

49. Who lays aside even the injunctions of the sacred scriptures to develop an undivided and uninterrupted flow of love towards God.

In some of the previous aphorisms the necessity of performing our worldly and religious duties when we are trying to develop devotion, is emphasized. But a stage comes in the life of a devotee when his devotion can become so intense and his mind become so imbued with love that it is not possible for him to attend even to his religious duties. This state of mind, if it is real, and not merely imagined by the devotee, absolves him both from his worldly and religious duties.

५०. स तरति स तरति **लोकांस्तारयति** ।

sa tarati sa tarati lokāṃs tārayati

सः he तरति crosses over the ocean of *saṃsāra* सः he तरति crosses over the ocean of *saṃsāra* लोकान् mankind तारयति helps to cross over the ocean of *saṃsāra* by overcoming its illusions and limitations.

50. Such a devotee not only overcomes the illusions and limitations of the worldly life himself but also helps others to do so by stimulating in them the devotion towards God.

५१. अनिर्वचनीयं प्रेमस्वरूपम् ।

anirvacanīyaṃ premasvarūpam

अनिर्वचनीयं indescribable, not capable of being expressed through the medium of language प्रेम devotion, love of God स्वरूपम् the real and essential form (of love).

51. The real nature of love of God cannot be described but is a matter of experience.

Everything in Nature which is rooted in the Real has two forms. One is its outer, visible form through which it finds expression on the lower planes of manifestation and can be perceived through the sense-organs. This is illusory and depends upon external circumstances. The other is its real, essential form which cannot be perceived through the sense-organs but can only be experienced within the realms of consciousness. The outer forms of the love of God have already been indicated in some of the previous aphorisms and are really its expressions or rather symptoms produced in the physical, emotional and mental worlds. They are generally produced in the early stages of the development of devotion by the impact of its experience on the lower vehicles and generally disappear when devotion becomes mature and is experienced in its real form or *svarūpa* within the depths of the devotee's consciousness.

५२. मूकास्वादनवत् ।

mūkāsvādanavat

मूक dumb person आस्वादन taste वत् like.

52. Like the taste of a dumb person.

Just as a dumb person can feel the taste of anything but cannot describe it to others so a devotee can feel the intense and real form of love but cannot describe it to others.

५३. प्रकाश्यते क्वापि पात्रे ।

prakāśyate kvāpi pātre

प्रकाश्यते is revealed, appears through क्वापि (क्व+अपि) somewhere, anywhere, sometimes where circumstances are favourable for its appearance पात्रे receptacle.

53. This intense real form of the love of God appears by itself in a fit receptacle, i.e. real devotee.

There is nothing accidental or arbitrary in the natural and spontaneous expression of the love of God in a devotee. When an individual has spent several lives in the cultivation of this kind of love, he is born in a particular life with all the potentiality and momentum gathered in this way and so love of God appears in him naturally with very little or no effort on his part. All saints have shown this kind of potentiality from an early age. But sometimes, some *karma* brought over from past lives prevents its expression in early life and it is only when that *karma* is exhausted that the shell breaks and the real devotee appears suddenly. So, let no one suppose that he is incapable of cultivating love of God because he does not feel it in an intense form in the immediate present. Let him adopt the right means and continue his efforts without being disheartened. He cannot know when the impediments which prevent the expression of this love may disappear and love of God may begin to well up naturally from within his heart. Even if it does not appear in this life he is creating potentiality for the future lives. He should also not forget that He whose love he seeks is always present within his heart and is Love itself. So, it is all a question of unveiling and not creating something.

५४. गुणरहितं कामनारहितं प्रतिक्षणवर्द्धमानमविच्छिन्नं सूक्ष्मतरमनुभवरूपम् ।

guṇarahitam kāmanārahitaṃ pratikṣaṇa vardhamānam avicchinnaṃ sūkṣmataram anubhavarūpam

गुणरहितं above the influence of the three *guṇas* कामनारहितं devoid of any personal motive or desire प्रतिक्षण from moment to moment वर्द्धमानम् increasing, expanding अविच्छिन्नं of ceaseless flow, uninterrupted सूक्ष्मतरम् existing or moving in the subtler realms of being अनुभवरूपम् of the nature of experience, which has to be experienced in order to be known.

54. This subtler and real form of love of God is above the realm of *guṇas* and worldly desires, increases steadily from moment to moment, is of ceaseless flow, exists in the subtler realms of being, and is essentially of the nature of experience.

This aphorism describes very effectively and beautifully the nature of that intense and subtle love of God which is present in the heart of a devotee when it has become mature and is a matter of experience in the innermost realms of being. The *bhakti* which is demonstrative and accompanied by violent emotions, though a necessary stage in the development of love of God is a lower state of that love of God which is born when there is union of consciousness of the devotee with that of the Divine Consciousness and the sharp distinction between the lover and the Beloved disappears and gives place to a state of awareness of non-duality and the bliss which is inherent in this state.

५५. तत् प्राप्य तदेवावलोकयति तदेव शृणोति तदेव
चिन्तयति ।

tat prāpya tad evāvalokayati tad eva śṛṇoti
tad eva cintayati

तत् that intense love of God referred to in the last aphorism प्राप्य having attained or obtained तदेव (तत्+एव) the object of love or God alone अवलोकयति sees शृणोति hears about चिन्तयति thinks of.

55. Having attained that highest state of love of God the devotee sees nothing but God, hears nothing but God and thinks of nothing else except God.

It is easy to understand the meaning of this enigmatic aphorism if we remember the unique transformation that is brought about in the mind of the devotee as a result of attaining this highest state of love. There is only One Reality in existence which we refer to as God and everything and every living creature is an expression of that Reality in different forms and at different levels of evolution. Love brings about a fusion of consciousness of the lover and the Beloved and this fusion therefore leads also to the knowledge of God who pervades, contains and embraces everything in existence. The more we love God the more intimately we come to know Him and the more we know Him the more intensely we are bound to love Him. It is this knowledge and love of God reinforcing each other which brings about that unification of consciousness in which the distinction between the two disappears and that highest state of awareness of oneness proclaimed by all great saints and sages is experienced.

५६. गौणीत्रिधा गुणभेदादार्तादिभेदाद्वा ।

gauṇī tridhā guṇabhedād ārtādi-bhedad vā

गौणी born of desire because it is influenced by the three *guṇas* त्रिधा three-fold गुणभेदात् because of the differences between the three *guṇas* आर्तादिभेदात् it is threefold also because of the three types of devotees, namely, the afflicted, inquisitive, and needy वा or.

56. The secondary or lower kind of devotion to God is threefold according as it is influenced by the three *guṇas* or according to the three types of devotees.

Devotees have been divided into two main classes, those whose devotion is utterly unselfish and those who have some ulterior motive in the background of their mind. The latter have been further subdivided in this aphorism into three classes mentioned above. Devotion in any form is beneficial to the devotee because it becomes purified and intensified naturally by the regenerative force inherent in it but, of course, the more intense and unselfish it is the higher its quality and the power to draw the devotee nearer to God. It is this fact which is pointed out in the next aphorism.

५७. उत्तरस्मादुत्तरस्मात् पूर्वपूर्वा श्रेयाय भवति ।

uttarasmād uttarasmāt pūrvapūrvā śreyāya bhavati

उत्तरस्मादुत्तरस्मात् than each succeeding one पूर्वपूर्वा each preceding one श्रेयाय for the better, is more effective भवति is.

57. Each preceding kind of devotion is better or more effective than the succeeding one.

This aphorism points out in a more involved language what has been said in explaining the previous aphorism.

५८. अन्यस्मात् सौलभ्यं भक्तौ ।

anyasmāt saulabhyaṃ bhaktau

अन्यस्मात् than any other सौलभ्यं easier भक्तौ in the path of devotion.

58. It is easier to enter into communion with God and to find Him through devotion than by any other method.

The reasons for this statement are given in the following aphorisms.

५९. प्रमाणान्तरस्यानपेक्षत्वात् स्वयं प्रमाणत्वात् ।

pramāṇāntarasyānapekṣatvāt svayam pramāṇatvāt

प्रमाणान्तरस्य of any other proof अनपेक्षत्वात् no necessity स्वयं itself प्रमाणत्वात् on account of being the proof.

59. It is not necessary to prove what is stated in the previous aphorism by any other method because the result of devotion itself provides the proof.

These results are pointed out in the next aphorism.

६०. शान्तिरूपात् परमानन्दरूपाच्च ।

śānti rūpāt paramānanda-rūpāc ca

शान्तिरूपात् one of the results of devotion to God is that it brings utter peace of mind परमानन्दरूपात् the other result is that it fills the devotee's mind with supreme bliss च and.

60. Utter peace of mind and supreme bliss are inherent in the very nature of devotion.

These are the two things which each soul desires for its happiness and they are inherent in devotion to God.

६१. लोकहानौ चिन्ता न कार्या निवेदितात्मलोकवेदत्वात् ।

loka-hānau cintā na kāryā niveditātmalokavedatvāt

लोकहानौ of social disorganization चिन्ता anxiety न not कार्या need not be entertained निवेदिता dedicated to God आत्म self लोकवेदत्वात् on account of (dedication of) customary and scriptural observances.

61. There should be no anxiety regarding social disorganization because the devotee continues to carry out his social and religious obligations, having dedicated these to God and being thus unaffected by them.

The objection might be raised against following the path of devotion that if people follow it, there will be social disorganization. But this fear is quite unfounded because the devotee is enjoined to continue to carry out his social and religious obligations after dedicating all his activities to God.

६२. न तत् सिद्धौ लोकव्यवहारो हेयः किंतु फलत्या-
गस्तत्साधनं च कार्यमेव ।

na tat-siddhau lokavyavahāro heyaḥ kiṃtu phala-
tyāgas tatsadhanaṃ ca kāryameva

न not तत् सिद्धौ in the development of devotion लोकव्यवहारः social customs and usage हेयः be neglected किंतु but फलत्यागः surrender of the fruits of actions तत् साधनं their performance च at the same time कार्यं should be done एव at the same time, certainly.

62. In the development of devotion social customs should not be neglected, but on the contrary attended to, at the same time surrendering the fruits of actions to God.

This aphorism repeats what has been said in a previous aphorism in another context.

६३. स्त्रीधननास्तिकचरित्रं न श्रवणीयम् ।

strī dhana-nāstikacaritram na śravaṇīyam

स्त्री woman, sex धन wealth नास्तिकं चरित्रं conduct of unbelievers न not श्रवणीयम् should be listened to.

63. The aspirant after devotion should not listen to talks about sex, wealth and the conduct of unbelievers.

This injunction has to be followed in spirit rather than literally. There is no doubt that if the mind is kept occupied with matters connected with sex, acquisition of wealth and atheistic doctrines it is very liable to become distracted and side-tracked from the path which the devotee has chosen for himself, namely, development of devotion towards God. Modern trends in our life bear ample corroboration of what has been pointed out in this aphorism. The craze for sex, making money and blatant profession of atheism which we find everywhere go hand in hand with the decline of faith in truly religious and spiritual ideals. The disastrous consequences of this attitude which results in making human life meaningless and purposeless and promotes discontentment and cynicism everywhere are quite apparent. Everywhere we find people engaging themselves in the pursuit of trivial objects in the external world in the hope of extracting whatever little ephemeral happiness they can extract from them and becoming internally more and more disillusioned and dissatisfied with life. Every great religion and every spiritual teacher in the past has declared emphatically that real and permanent happiness can be found only within oneself because there is the source of all knowledge, strength and bliss—God. But no one pays any heed to this warning with results which are inevitable.

६४. अभिमानदम्भादिकं त्याज्यम् ।

abhimāna-dambhādikaṃ tyājyam

अभिमान self-conceit, high opinion of oneself दम्भ arrogance, fraud आदिकं etc. त्याज्यम् should be given up.

64. Self-conceit, arrogance, etc. should be given up.

The aphorisms which we are discussing give some of the weaknesses of human nature which should be eliminated from one's character to provide a sound foundation for the development of devotion. But the weaknesses which have been mentioned should be taken only as illustrative as indicated by the use of the word, etc. There are other undesirable traits also which have to be eliminated in order that the devotee may have a character favourable for the development of devotion to God. As the distortions and impurities which can be produced in human nature by our perversity and ignorance of the facts of spiritual life are of innumerable variety it is not possible or necessary to enumerate them and to try to weed them out one by one. The proper method of dealing with this problem is to do serious and detailed self-introspection in the light of our highest spiritual ideals and to concentrate on the positive aspect of this problem as a whole and not piece meal. The methods which have to be adopted have been discussed thoroughly in other contexts and they should be studied and applied systematically, intelligently and persistently until a character of the required quality has been developed.

६५. तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकं
तस्मिन्नेव करणीयम् ।

tad arpitākhilācāraḥ san kāma-krodhā-
bhimānādikaṃ tasminn eva karaṇīyaṃ

तदर्पिताखिलाचारः having dedicated all one's activities and conduct to God सन् becoming कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकं desire, resentment, self-assertion etc. तस्मिन् in Him or towards Him एव only करणीयम् should be shown or done.

65. Having, once for all, dedicated all his activities and conduct to God he should show (if at all; if it can't be helped) desire, resentment, self-assertion, etc. towards Him only.

This is an enigmatic aphorism but its significance will be easily understood if we remember that it merely shows another aspect of the quality which has been referred to as *ananyatā* in a previous aphorism. In the early stages of the development of devotion towards God it is inevitable that the devotee will not have complete control over his lower nature and still have in him the tendency to be overpowered by such weaknesses as resentment, self-assertion, etc. What is the best way of dealing with this problem and getting rid of these weaknesses? To direct all these emotions towards Him. In this way he will be able to give vent to his pent up feelings; but because his mind is directed again and again towards Him, it develops a progressively more intimate relation with Him. And such is the nature of Divine alchemy which works in such cases that gradually these undesirable emotions will be transformed and thus increase the intensity of his devotion.

६६. त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकं नित्यदास्यनित्यकान्ताभजनात्मकं
प्रेम कार्यं प्रेमैव कार्यम् ।

tri-rūpa-bhaṅga-pūrvakam nityadāsya-nityakāntā-
bhajanātmakaṃ prema kāryaṃ prema eva
kāryam

त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकं having risen above the triple, secondary form of devotion referred to in aphorism 56 नित्यदास्यनित्यकान्ताभजनात्मकं based upon the constant attitude of a servant towards his master or that of a wife towards her husband प्रेम love, devotion कार्यं should be cultivated प्रेम love ऐव only.

66. Having cultivated and then risen above the secondary, triple form of devotion to God, the devotee should cultivate assiduously the primary form of devotion in which he can adopt any of the different kinds of attitudes towards God, such as those of a servant towards his master or that of a wife towards her husband.

The cultivation of devotion is a gradual and progressive process and in the early stages it is inevitable that it should be vitiated by many defects such as selfishness, etc. But these undesirable defects though a necessary feature of its cultivation in the early stages have to be eliminated systematically and intelligently in order that the devotee may be able to develop that pure, unalloyed devotion which alone can bring about the ultimate mergence of his personality in the Lord and a unification of consciousness of the two which is referred to generally as God-realization.

६७. भक्ता एकान्तिनो मुख्याः ।

bhaktā ekāntino mukhyāḥ

भक्ताः devotees एकान्तिनः single-hearted, those who love God and God only मुख्याः primary, principal, real.

67. Those who love God and God only and nothing else are His primary or real devotees.

As has been pointed out in discussing the previous aphorism this kind of unalloyed devotion can be acquired only by stages and persistent effort in its cultivation. In those rare cases where a devotee shows signs of intense and single-hearted devotion from an early age we are dealing with highly advanced souls who have been cultivating devotion and unfolding their spiritual consciousness during a series of preceding lives. Nothing in Nature can happen accidentally or suddenly, though owing to our limited vision and knowledge, certain events or developments may appear so.

६८. कण्ठावरोध-रोमाञ्चाश्रुभिः परस्परं लपमानाः
पावयन्ति कुलानी पृथिवीं च ।

kaṇṭhāvarodha-romāñca-śrubhiḥ parasparam
lapamānāḥ pāvayanti kulānī pṛthiviṃ ca

कण्ठावरोधरोमाञ्चाश्रुभिः marked by choking voice, hairs standing on end and tears परस्परं amongst themselves लपमानाः conversing पावयन्ति purify कुलानि their family पृथिवीं the earth च and.

68. Conversing amongst themselves (about God and His attributes) with a choking voice, with hairs standing on end and with tears flowing down their cheeks, they purify their families as well as the earth.

Those who have not moved in circles in which real devotees gather together to talk about Him and sing songs about Him and His attributes will not be able to appreciate the state of mind of which, what is mentioned in the aphorism, is an outer expression. The decline and gradual disappearance of real religious sentiment even in countries like India, where religion used to play a very dominant role in the life of the Hindus, has made such scenes as described above very rare. Lecturing, expounding doctrines of philosophy and performing elaborate rituals have taken the place of gatherings in which real devotees met together to have the joy of exchanging their religious ideas and sentiments and singing songs highly charged with emotions aroused by such songs.

The fact of the matter is that religion and religious institutions have become divorced from true religious aims and instead of cultivating and promoting religious sentiments and devotion towards God have in many cases entered the field of big business and become means of making money. Talking about Hindus I may be allowed to say that we are by nature inclined towards religion but have allowed ourselves to be swept away by the tide of materialism and the pursuit of worldly aims which is threatening to engulf the whole world and to destroy whatever is of real value in human life, in the pursuit of illusory objects of pleasure and human vanity.

Whether we and the world, as a whole, will realize the hollowness of physical and psychedelic experiences and the impossibility of finding real peace and happiness in them remains to be seen but unless this happens there does not appear to be much chance of man turning away from the pursuit of these superficial aims and enquiring where true happiness is likely to be found. Even if he is disillusioned with the objects that he has been pursuing and asks this pertinent question his mind is not likely to turn to religion for an answer. For, as pointed out above, what makes religion a source of peace and real happiness has become submerged under the superficial formalities and paraphernalia of religious life and those who have any sense of discrimination and are seeking the realities of religious life are likely to find all this outer show of religious life an empty shell without any life.

There are innumerable *āśramas* scattered all over this country established with the object of promoting religious life, and many aspirants in search of real happiness and peace which religion alone can give wander from one *āśrama* to another in search of inner satisfaction which they expect from religious life. But they find generally that these *āśramas* are mere institutions and those who run them or preside over them are more concerned with the problems of running the institution than with the real aims of a religious institution. The reason for the conditions mentioned above in every sphere of religious life is the fact that people have forgotten or ignore the fact that the true source of religious satisfaction and progress is the Divine Life hidden within our hearts and unless we try and succeed in coming into touch with that Life either individually or collectively nothing external will be of any avail.

The intellectualization of religious life and forgetting the fact that religious life must be based upon emotions is mainly responsible for the decreasing attraction of religion for the common man. The purpose of real religion is to bring man into closer relationship with God. Man cannot draw nearer to God except through devotion and love. Without devotion and love of God there can be no real inner happiness or its more intense form of bliss which man seeks in religion. So religious life based upon the intellect and following a prescribed code of external conduct deprives religion of that inner satisfaction and peace which is the object of leading a religious life. Not only is there intellectualization of religious life but emotions have come to be regarded in so-called civilized society as a sign of weakness, and so even when people feel them they tend to hide their religious sentiments from others. It is difficult for such people to understand and appreciate what is sought to be conveyed in the aphorisms we are discussing.

It is necessary to remember, however, that these outer manifestations of devotion are the expressions of a much deeper state of mind existing on the spiritual planes of being. These planes of being are not only invisible but inaccessible to the common devotee. It is only when his consciousness becomes unfolded sufficiently to enable him to come into direct contact with those planes that he becomes aware of the fact that the outer manifestations are the result of a closer union of his consciousness with the Divine Consciousness and the love and bliss which are inherent in such union.

६९. तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि सुकर्मीकुर्वन्ति कर्माणि
सच्छास्त्री कुर्वन्ति शास्त्राणि ।

tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni sukarmī-kurvanti karmāṇi
sac-chastri-kurvanti śāstrāṇi

तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति make holy places तीर्थानि places of pilgrimage सुकर्मीकुर्वन्ति make meritorious कर्माणि actions सच्छास्त्रीकुर्वन्ति make sacred scriptures शास्त्राणि writings laying down rules of righteous conduct.

69. They add holiness to holy sites, they give actions the character of meritoriousness, they raise mere writings to the status of sacred scriptures.

How have places which are now considered holy and become places of pilgrimage acquired their holiness? Because these holy men who attained union with God through devotion lived there. In what way do ordinary people learn how to perform actions which are meritorious from the religious point of view? By example set by holy men who live in communion with God. How have certain writings come to acquire the status of scriptures? By the fact that they have been written by those who tried to find God through devotion and succeeded in their efforts. All sacred scriptures are the records of the life, experiences, ideas and injunctions of holy men who were able to come into close union with God and were transformed by this union into saints and sages, raising both individuals and communities to a higher level morally and spiritually.

७०. तन्मयाः ।

tanmayāḥ

तन्मयाः full of THAT, steeped in the consciousness of God.

70. They are aware of the presence of God everywhere and all the time, within them and around them.

Since there is only One Reality and everything in existence is an expression of that Reality anyone who becomes aware of that Reality finds himself steeped in that Reality. This state lasts as long as duality is present i.e. he sees himself separate from God though one with Him in essence. There is, however, a further and ultimate stage in which even this duality disappears and the union between the devotee and God is so perfect that the devotee is unable to distinguish his consciousness from that of God. According to Hindu tradition most devotees or *bhaktas* prefer to remain in the realm of dualism so that they can experience the bliss which is inherent in the intense love of God. This idea is based on a wrong conception of the non-dual state, for, though there can be no love when the lover and the object of love have become one, in the sense in which we consider love, the experience of being immersed in the Ocean of Love and Ānanda must certainly be more exquisite in nature than the love of an isolated individual for the Supreme Soul who is referred to as God. But these things are really matters of experiences on the highest planes and it is no use discussing them with our limited experiences of love and happiness.

७१. मोदन्ते पितरो नृत्यन्ति देवता: सनाथा चेयं
भूर्भवति ।

modante pitaro nṛtyanti devatāḥ sanāthā ceyam
bhūr bhavati

मोदन्ते rejoice पितर: departed ancestors living in superphysical worlds नृत्यन्ति dance देवता: the shining ones, celestial beings सनाथा secure owing to the presence of Self-realized devotees on the physical plane च and इयं this भू: earth भवति becomes.

71. When a devotee who has found God is present on this earth, those who have passed over into the superphysical realms after death and the celestial beings living in those realms also rejoice and even this physical earth (which is supposed to have a soul) feels secure.

The ideas given in this aphorism are of typically Hindu tradition and those who are not familiar with them will find it difficult to understand what this aphorism means. It is enough for such people to grasp the underlying idea that when a devotee of God who has attained Self-realization is present among men on this earth it is not only those who come in contact with him on the physical plane who are benefited but also those who live on the superphysical planes. For, the consciousness of such a *Mahātmā* embraces the superphysical planes also and he is able to help the denizens also of these planes. The whole of Nature rejoices and even those things which are not supposed to think and feel experience a mysterious form of upliftment as a result of this descent of the Divine Life from above.

७२. नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलधनक्रियादिभेदः।

nāsti teṣu jāti-vidyā-rūpa-kula-dhana-kriyādi-bhedaḥ

नास्ति (न+अस्ति) न not अस्ति exists तेषु amongst them जाति birth, community विद्या learning रूप appearance कुल family धन wealth क्रिया activity आदि etc. भेदः distinction.

72. Amongst the real devotees of God there can exist no distinctions of community, learning, appearance, family, wealth, activity and the like.

The manifest world is a flux of phenomena with differences and distinctions of infinite variety. Those who don't see God in everything and everything in God are naturally affected by these distinctions and because they see themselves separate from others are inclined to regard themselves superior to them. Any kind of superiority, such as that of wealth, learning, etc. can become a sufficient reason for considering themselves above those amongst whom they live. An officer considers himself superior to his subordinates although morally and spiritually he may actually be inferior to many of them. A wealthy man who can afford to live a more comfortable or even luxurious life generally looks down upon his less fortunate brethren who can hardly make the two ends meet. Needless to say, that these distinctions which are present in the minds of the ordinary men are the result of the various kinds of illusions from which they suffer, the chief among them being the illusion that they are their bodies and not the Spirit which uses the body as an instrument on the physical plane. Those who are aware of the Divine Life manifesting through all human beings cannot obviously be affected by such distinctions.

७३. यतस्तदीयाः ।

yatas tadīyāḥ

यतः since तदीयाः belong to Him, are expressions of His life and Consciousness.

73. There are present in the minds of those who have found God no distinctions of the kind referred to in the last aphorism because they see all human beings, nay, all living creatures, as expressions and embodiments of the Divine Life which pervades everything and is present in its fullness in the heart of every human being.

What is stated above is not a mere spiritual ideal which has to be striven after but cannot be attained. It has been seen exemplified in the life of every great saint, sage or Spiritual Teacher who has come down upon this earth to give the vital message of the Divine destiny of man and the possibility of his realizing his Divine nature.

These two aphorisms should also provide some food for thought for those who profess brotherhood of man as an ideal to be striven after. Only those who are aware of this Divine Life in man can practise brotherhood in the real sense. Those who are not aware of this oneness of all Life but sensing this oneness devote themselves earnestly to the work of helping other people in every possible way and relieving their suffering are treading the path which leads to the realization of true brotherhood. Those who merely profess brotherhood but are neither aware of this oneness, nor have any real sympathy or compassion for all living creatures don't really know what brotherhood means, even though they might be able to give learned lectures on the subject and write books proclaiming the unity of mankind.

There is a world of difference between idealogical brotherhood and real brotherhood. The former is based upon a theory that human beings ought to be knit together into one community even though this may involve cruelty, destruction on a colossal scale and the violation of all moral laws which are accepted as valid in the sphere of human relationships. Those who swore by "fraternity" in the French revolution sent thousands upon thousands of innocent people to the guillotine in practising fraternity. It is needless to say that this kind of artificial brotherhood created to gain a political or social end is a mere slogan and is generally violated in the very process of practising and promoting it.

Real brotherhood, on the other hand, is not a theory but a fact of direct experience for those who have unfolded their spiritual consciousness sufficiently to become aware of the unity of all life. It is not artificially created by force or persuasion but exists eternally as a fact in Nature in the whole of the manifested universe, though there may be no one to recognize it or to practise it. The only way of promoting it is to increase gradually the number of those who become aware of, or at least begin to sense, the unity of all life by following the path of spiritual unfoldment by means of devotion or any other method. This may be a slow process but it will bring gradually into existence a body of men who will transform civilization naturally and rapidly in accordance with spiritual ideals. Considering what one great saint or World Teacher can do for the upliftment of men one can imagine what only a few thousands of such devotees can accomplish.

७४. वादो नावलम्ब्यः ।

vādo nāvalambyaḥ

वादः vain discussion न not अवलम्ब्यः to be depended upon.

74. In developing devotion the devotee should not depend upon vain discussions regarding the existence or attributes of God.

७५. बाहुल्यावकाशत्वादनियतत्वाच्च ।

bāhuly āvakāśatvād aniyatatvāc ca

बाहुल्य plenty, abundant अवकाशत्वात् room, scope for अनियतत्वात् on account of their being still uncertainty च and.

75. Because vain discussions and talking about God can go on indefinitely without ever arriving at the truth about Him with certainty.

This aphorism answers the question posed in the last aphorism. It means that talking and discussing questions regarding God all the time is futile because we can never arrive at the truth regarding these questions by discussion, reading or hearing lectures. This is a matter of experience and not discussion as in the case of other problems of life. What has been said above should serve as a warning to those who depend completely upon hearing lectures, reading and discussion for solving problems of spiritual life. These can't be avoided completely but once an aspirant has gained adequate knowledge for his purpose he should concentrate all his energies and faculties on following that path and practising those methods which bring about realization by direct experience in his consciousness.

७६. भक्तिशास्त्राणि मननीयानि तद्बोधकर्माणि करणीयानि ।

bhaktiśāstrāṇi mananīyāni tad bodhakarmāṇi karaṇīyāni

भक्तिशास्त्राणि treatises on devotion and the methods of its development मननीयानि should be studied and reflected upon तद्बोधकर्माणि observances and methods prescribed in them करणीयानि should be practised regularly.

76. Treatises on devotion and methods of its development should be studied and reflected upon and observances and methods prescribed in them should be practised regularly.

७७. सुखदुःखेच्छालाभादि त्यक्ते काले प्रतीक्षमाणे क्षणार्द्धमपि व्यर्थं न नेयम् ।

sukha-duḥkhecchā-lābhādi tyakte kāle pratīkṣamāṇe kṣaṇārdham api vyartham na neyam

सुख pleasure दुःख pain इच्छा desire लाभादि gain, etc. त्यक्ते abandoning, surrendering काले in course of time प्रतीक्षमाणे waiting patiently for क्षणार्द्धम् half a moment अपि even व्यर्थं uselessly, in vain न not नेयम् should be passed.

77. Abandoning pleasure, pain, desire, gain, etc., waiting patiently for devotion to develop or appear in course of time, the aspirant for devotion should not pass even half a moment uselessly.

The above aphorism is meant to give the aspirant some idea of the attitude and life he should adopt in his effort to develop devotion. In the first place, he should give up and eliminate from his mind all those tendencies which tend to distract it and draw it towards worldly objects instead of concentrating it on the Lord. In the second place, he should adopt an attitude of infinite patience in his self-discipline and not get disheartened if the results of his effort don't appear quickly. It is possible to adopt this kind of attitude only if he has unbounded faith in the efficacy of the methods he is following and the compassion of the Lord who guides and fulfils the desire of every devotee for union with Him provided he is earnest and perseveres in his efforts. And lastly, since the development of devotion is a matter of generating force it is necessary to spend as much time as possible in those exercises which are meant to develop this force and raise its potential to an adequate degree.

७८. अहिंसा-सत्य-शौच-दयास्तिक्यादि-चारित्र्याणि
परिपालनीयानि ।

ahimsā-satya-śauca-dayāstikyādi-cāritryāṇi pari-pālanīyāni

अहिंसा harmlessness सत्य truthfulness शौच cleanliness दया kindness अस्तिक्यादि-चारित्र्याणि faith in God and the laws of spiritual life and other required traits of character परिपालनीयानि should be adopted and cultivated.

78. Harmlessness, truthfulness, cleanliness, kindness, and other required virtues or traits of character should be adopted and cultivated by the aspirant for devotion.

Some traits of character and attitudes which have to be cultivated by the aspirant have already been prescribed in some of the previous aphorisms. This aphorism mentions some other traits of character which are required for the cultivation of devotion. The student will see that all these virtues which have been mentioned correspond to the two *aṅgas* of Yoga which are referred to as *yama* and *niyama*.

There are two points which the aspirant should always keep in mind. First, that the cultivation of devotion or any other means of unfolding our spiritual potentialities is not possible without a rigorous self-discipline to be continued until the required state of mind and mode of life have been acquired. Second, that these traits of character or virtues which have to be developed cannot be enumerated and defined and formulated in a rigid code of conduct. The problem of our life has to be tackled as a whole and intelligently and the aspirant should aim at producing the state of mind and attitudes which are essential for leading a truly and dynamic spiritual life. This point has been discussed in other contexts and need not be dealt with here.

७९. सर्वदा सर्वभावेन निश्चिन्तैर्भगवानेव भजनीयः ।

sarvadā sarvabhāvena niścintair bhagavān eva bhajanīyaḥ

सर्वदा always, at all times सर्वभावेन with all kinds of attitudes and methods of approach निश्चिन्तैः without any hesitation, misgivings or anxiety भगवान् the Lord एव alone भजनीयः should be constantly remembered and thoughts of devotion directed to Him.

79. The Lord alone should be constantly and without any anxiety remembered and devotion directed to Him all the time with any attitude that the devotee feels inclined to adopt.

The devotee should remember that the object of his devotion is that Reality which includes and embraces everything and every power in manifestation. So, whatever attitude he adopts towards Him in directing his devotion to Him is appropriate and effective in gaining response from Him. And since He is the very nature of Love and compassion this response can be only of a beneficial nature and bound to bring him nearer to the Lord. In Hindu scriptures like the *Bhāgavatam* it is said that even if any individual approaches Him with a hostile attitude he ultimately gains freedom from the illusions and limitations of worldly life. For, though the attitude of the individual is that of hostility the response from the Lord of love and compassion can be only of compassion and this gradually brings about a gradual transformation in the individual towards Him. But, of course, there is no reason why anyone who wants to draw closer to Him should adopt any other attitude except that of devotion and complete trust in Him.

८०. स कीर्त्यमानः शीघ्रमेवाविर्भवत्यनुभावयति
भक्तान् ।

sa kīrtyamānaḥ śīghramevāvirbhavaty anubhāvayati bhaktān

स He कीर्त्यमानः being earnestly invoked शीघ्रम् without delay एव surely आविर्भवति appears, reveals Himself अनुभावयति fills with His presence or influence भक्तान् devotees.

80. Being earnestly invoked He reveals Himself without the least delay and fills His devotees with his influence or presence.

This is a very important aphorism provided we understand its profound significance. The first thing we should try to grasp is that in invoking God we are not approaching an ordinary person with his mind full of all kinds of prejudices and predilections, on the one hand, and selfish interests, and weaknesses on the other. When such an individual is approached by another, all these factors determine his response and so the result is to a certain extent uncertain and unpredictable. Besides this, since the individual is finite and full of all kinds of limitations, the response, even when it is favourable, can be only finite and determined by the limitations of the individual approached.

But in invoking God these limitations don't exist at all, for He is that all-pervading, all-containing Reality outside which nothing can possibly exist, and anything which can form part of a manifested system can emerge if the necessary conditions for its manifestation are present. He is not only an infinite source containing everything but is present in His full splendour, knowledge, love and power behind the consciousness of every individual Monad as has been explained in *Man, God and the Universe*. It is true that His knowledge, love and power are present in every Monad only in a potential form, but when a thing is present already in a potential form it can be made to manifest by merely unfolding it, provided we know how to do this. A tremendous amount of physical energy is present in gun powder but for an individual who does not know how to release this energy, gun powder is merely an inert black powder. On the other hand, in the case of one who knows that he can release this energy by igniting the gun powder, he can use gun powder for bringing about the most spectacular results both for constructive and destructive purposes.

The second point we should note in grasping the significance of this aphorism is that God is not only an infinite source of everything which can find expression in manifestation but He is the very essence of consciousness in which all Divine attributes are present in their infinite variety and degree of intensity, attributes like love, power, compassion and responsiveness to the call of the needy and the devotee. To those who are needy and call upon Him for help He gives what they need. But as evolution proceeds and the spiritual potentialities which are hidden in the Monad begin to become active the nature of the needs and things the Monad asks for, go on changing and becoming more and more refined, and less and less selfish. And ultimately, when the highest kind of wisdom has replaced the ignorance of the common man as a result of this progressive refinement, the devotee wants only God and not anything which God can give. Although he knows that in finding God he will find everything, it is not with the motive of finding the source of all gifts that he seeks Him. Pure, unadulterated love of God is his only motive in seeking Him and it is only when the devotee seeks Him with this kind of motive that God appears. It is this kind of attitude and purity of motive which the word *kīrtyamānaḥ* implies.

The form in which the Divine response appears when God is invoked with the pure motive of love has been expressed in this aphorism in a manner which requires some explanation. In order to understand the nature of this response, we have to grasp the subtle significance of the two Sanskrit words *āvirbhavaḥ* and *anubhavaḥ*. The first word which means literally revelation cannot in the present context mean an external appearance, for God has no form and is an all-pervading Reality. He cannot be perceived through the sense-organs but only through an inner experience in the realm of consciousness. What is the nature of this experience which is sought to be conveyed by the word *anubhavaḥ*? In order to understand the nature of this experience we have to recall the important Occult doctrine that the Centre of consciousness of every Monad through which his mind functions is concentric with the *Mahābindu* the Great Centre through which the Divine Mind and Consciousness function. Although the individual mind and the Divine Mind function through the same Centre there exists a subjective barrier between the two which prevents the individual mind becoming aware of what is present in the Divine Mind and Consciousness. The gradual attenuation and ultimate removal of this barrier between the two is the ultimate objective of all systems of Yoga and spiritual culture and the successful accomplishment of this aim is what is referred to as Self-realization.

Now, the important fact which this aphorism points out is that though this subjective barrier between the consciousness of man and God can be removed only gradually by the long and arduous process of self-discipline which may take several lives of intensive effort, it is possible for God to remove it at any time and by thus uniting the consciousness of the aspirant with His own, give him the unique and unimaginable vision of His Divine nature. For the barrier which exists between the two, as has been pointed out above, is a subjective barrier, which is created by the Divine power which is referred to as *Māyā* and he who has the power to create the barrier has also the power to remove it whenever He wills to do so.

What is that force which compels even God to exercise this extraordinary power? Love. Nothing but pure and unselfish love in the form of intense devotion can bring about this miracle and that is why devotion is generally considered as the most effective means of finding God. It is true that the cultivation of this kind of intense devotion is not easy but if and when it is present it is unfailing in its effectiveness to achieve its aim. That is why in the next aphorism the importance and necessity of cultivating devotion is emphasized in an unusual manner.

८१. त्रिसत्यस्य भक्तिरेव गरीयसी भक्तिरेव गरीयसी।

tri-satyasya bhaktir eva garīyasī bhaktir eva
garīyasī

त्रिसत्यस्य that which was, is, and will always remain true भक्तिः love of God एव alone गरीयसी is greater, weightier, heavier, more important.

81. That love weighs heaviest with God was, is and will always remain true.

What is stated in this aphorism has been pointed out in some of the previous aphorisms also but the great emphasis laid on the effectiveness of love in drawing closer and ultimately gaining union with God should make the aspirant pause and ponder this question deeply. Many aspirants consider such statements as expressions of partiality for their particular method of unfolding spiritual potentialities on the part of those who have an emotional temperament. They don't realize adequately the intrinsic quality of love in bringing together and then ultimately merging the consciousness of the lover in that of the Beloved. And when that beloved is God, whose response to the call of love is unfailing and unlimited there can remain no doubt with regard to the efficacy of devotion in finding and becoming one with Him. Many think that this may be so, but it is not easy to develop this kind of devotion. They forget that it is not the difficulty of developing devotion which is the real problem of spiritual life. The real problem is that we do not want to find God, either because we are not yet developed spiritually, or our mind is so much occupied with worldly matters that there is no place left in it for God.

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